THE CURATE OF COVENTRY:

A TALE.

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THE CURATE OF COVENTRY: A TALE.

By JOHN POTTER,
Author of the Hiſtory and Adventures of
ARTHUR O'BRADLEY.

Qui genus humanum ingenio ſuperavit, & omnes
Reſtinxit ſtellas, exortus uti aërius Sol.
LUCRETIUS.

Regum æquabat opes animo.——
VIRGIL.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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THE CONTENTS OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

CHAP. I.

EXordium: Shewing the Difficulty of giving an Air of Truth to the Works of Fiction; and, that it ſhould be the Aim of Novel-writing, to convey Inſtruction, as well as Entertainment: With a Sketch of the general Deſign of this Work. Page 1.

CHAP. II.

Containing an Account of a Warwickſhire Family. p. 6.

CHAP.

CONTENTS.

CHAP. III.

The Character of Mr. Southern, and his Family. p. 20.

CHAP. IV.

A Picture of Matrimony in High-Life; with an Account of a very romantic Lady, whose Character and Conduct will not do any great Credit to this History. p. 32.

CHAP. V.

The History of Miss Southern continued. p. 50.

CHAP. VI.

Which introduces the Hero of this History. p. 65.

CHAP.

CONTENTS.

CHAP. VII.

The 'Squire and the Curate make a Viſit to the Caſtle of Contentment; whither the Reader may accompany them if he chuſes it. p. 79.

CHAP. VIII.

Which introduces the beautiful Miſs Southern. With ſome Remarks on the Paſſion of Jealouſy. p. 97.

CHAP. IX.

An Apology for the Curate; with a Diſcovery, that will pleaſe ſome Readers, and diſpleaſe others. p. 110.

CHAP. X.

Containing a Circumſtance, which frequently happens in moſt Chriſtian Families. p. 129.

CHAP.

CONTENTS.

CHAP. XI.

A Converſation betwixt the 'Squire and Parſon Colraine, not more entertaining than the Contents of the laſt Chapter. p. 169.

CHAP. XII.

A very ſhort one; containing an intereſting Circumſtance, on which ſome important Events in this Hiſtory depend. p. 178.

CHAP. XIII.

Containing a Variety of intereſting Particulars, by Means of which, the Plot begins to thicken. p. 186.

CHAP. XIV.

Full of Miſchief. p. 203

THE

THE CURATE OF COVENTRY.

CHAP. I.

Exordium: Shewing the Difficulty of giving an Air of Truth to the Works of Fiction; and, that it ſhould be the Aim of Novel-writing, to convey Inſtruction, as well as Entertainment: With a Sketch of the general Deſign of this Work.

THERE is no kind of writing more difficult, than that which exhibits life in its true ſtate; diverſified by characters, ſubject to thoſe accidents that frequently happen, and influenced

by paſſions and qualities which actually exiſt amongſt mankind. The real hiſtorian, wholly attentive to facts, rejects with diſdain, every fiction; while the writer of thoſe familiar hiſtories, called NOVELS, is not only obliged to diſpoſe his mind to the operations of the imagination, but to ſupport fiction, by a train of events agreeable to obſervation and experience, in order to give it the appearance of reality. Nor is this all, for it is not ſufficient, that the narrative obſerves the preſcriptions of nature and probability, unleſs it will afford ſome moral inſtruction, that may exalt humanity, improve our ideas of virtue, or, by ſtrengthening hope, teach us to bear the calamities of life without repining.

There

'There is another perplexing circumſtance, under which the Noveliſt perpetually labours, while the real hiſtorian is entirely excluded: we mean, the difficulty of drawing feigned characters. It is generally aſſerted, that he who copies nature, follows an unerring guide. This poſtulatum would admit of ſome diſpute; but if true, we will venture to declare, that many characters, to be met with in the world, are by no means fit for exhibition. Beſides, were an author to draw his portraits from real life, in the groſs, he would ſo blend their good and bad qualities together, as to render them equally conſpicuous; ſo that, it is highly probable, we might loſe the abhorrence of their vices, in a review of their virtues. It ſhould be the excellence of art, to imitate the perfections of nature;

becauſe, there are many characters that ought not to be drawn; for which reaſon it is eſſentially neceſſary, to diſtinguiſh thoſe parts of nature moſt proper for imitation.

We would not have it underſtood, that bad characters ſhould not be exhibited; on the contrary, vice ſhould be ſhewn; but then, its deformities ſhould be ſo diſpoſed, as to excite our contempt and hatred: for, if the graces of gaity, and the ſprightlineſs of wit, are permitted to throw a veil over them, there is danger, leſt the mind, not ſufficiently on its guard, ſhould be miſled by the deception, and hence, become reconciled to it.

The reader will be greatly diſappointed, ſhould he expect to find this hiſtory abound

abound with wonders or enchantments, in imitation of thoſe magical romances, written in the dark ages of ignorance and ſuperſtition; as it contains nothing more than a plain and authentic account of its Hero. As to the occaſional anecdotes and epiſodes, relative to the other characters, the author has endeavoured to diſpoſe them in ſuch points of view, as to be capable of affording innocent merriment, while they awaken the mind to the practice of virtue: the nobleſt purpoſe to which they could be applied.

If, as will be frequently ſeen, ſome attempts are made to excite riſibility, they are founded on ſuch incidents and circumſtances, as will not offend the moſt reſerved delicacy.

CHAP. II.

Containing an Account of a Warwickſhire Family.

NEAR the ancient and memorable town of Coventry, there lived a very honeſt gentleman, of whoſe anceſtors it is recorded, for ſeveral generations back, that they kept the beſt hunters, brewed the beſt ale, and had the moſt pompous funerals of any family in the county of Warwick.

One principle ſeems to have prevailed univerſally through the different branches of this ancient family, that of being juſt and generous, ſocial and benevolent to their friends, their neighbours, and their dependants. It

was

was the peculiar ſtudy of their lives to be good, rather than to be great: hence, on the one hand, they avoided the indulgence of lawleſs pleaſures; and on the other, the captivating ſolicitations of avarice and ambition.

Circumſcribed in their deſires by the counſels of prudence, they held it a maxim, to be contented with their ſituation and poſſeſſions; having the wiſdom to prefer their own ſtate to that of others, and not wiſhing for any thing beyond their power of accompliſhing, they ſeldom experienced the anxieties of expectation, or ſuffered the miſeries of diſappointment.

Directed in their conduct by theſe laudable principles, neither the fortune, nor the honour of their worthy proge-

nitors was ever injured by the vanity of parliamentary views. And yet, notwithſtanding this laſt particular, though we are afraid it will ſcarcely be credited by many of our readers, the poor had not better friends, the church better members, nor the king better ſubjects, than the family of the Southerns.

Vanity does not ſeem to have marked any part of their compoſition, beyond that of valuing themſelves for the antiquity of their family. This they conſidered as a matter of the utmoſt importance, and made it the uſual topic of converſation on winter evenings; or, whenever viſited by ſtrangers; who were always carried into a long gallery, where hung the portraits of their anceſtors, which they exhibited by way of evidence to the truth of their hiſtory.

Here

Here you were informed, that ſuch a branch of the male-line was an eminent fox-hunter, and always came in at the death; having been peculiarly dexterous in leaping over five-barred gates and ſtone-hedges. Another, a celebrated ſpeaker at the quarter-ſeſſions, where he was uſually honoured with the dignity of the chair. A third, famous for preſenting a country petition to the king in perſon. A fourth, a very great mathematician and aſtronomer, who could calculate eclipſes, foretell the appearance of comets, and had the ſun, moon and ſtars, almoſt at his command: he alſo ſtudied the longitude and perpetual motion, which he had juſt accompliſhed, when he was carried off by a quinſy in his throat. And laſtly, that a fifth was a clergyman, and a great orator, who preached no ſermons but what were of

his own making; and, by the power of his great learning, knew how to lay ghoſts and evil ſpirits. *Note*, As an appendage to this gentleman's character, they uſually added, that he would have been a biſhop, if not an archbiſhop, only he wrote a book in favour of witchcraft and ſorcery, which the reſt of the clergy had not ſenſe enough to underſtand, and therefore wrote againſt it; by which means his promotion was prevented.

Nor were the females without their peculiar merits and excellencies. One, was the daughter of a baronet, whoſe ſiſter had been maid of honour to queen Elizabeth. Another, married the ſon of a biſhop, by whom ſhe had ſix and twenty children; was reputed a great beauty, and lived to a good old age. A third,

third, was noted for her ſkill in pickling and preſerving, cramming of turkies, and curing agues with a charm of of her own deviſing.---- As for the reſt of the catalogue, which was very numerous, their eminent qualities were equally ſingular and important.

The pictures of theſe famous worthies were all ſaid to be great likeneſſes; but an impartial obſerver would have ſworn, that ſcarce one in the whole collection reſembled any thing in *heaven above, or in the earth beneath*, &c. However, theſe good people gazed on them with greater admiration, than a modern connoiſſeur would review the inimitable works of a Raphael, a Kneller, or a Reynolds.

The ridiculous veneration this family had for the portraits of their anceſtors, brings to remembrance a circumſtance that happened ſome years ſince, at a borough-town, in the weſt of * England.

Two of the candidates, at a general election, made the following propoſal to the mayor and corporation, who were the principal of the electors: That, in caſe they were choſe, they would give them the choice of three things, by way of return for their favour. The firſt was an elegant organ for the pariſh-church, which had long been wanted to regulate a miſerable ſet of fingers. The ſecond, a new peal of eight bells, as the old one conſiſted of but five, the tenor of which had been cracked many years. And, the third, to ſend an eminent portrait-

* B-rnſt-ple.

portrait-painter from London, to draw the pictures of the whole body corporate, with which they might embelliſh their town-hall. The generoſity of the candidates gained them the election, which was no ſooner over, but Mr. Mayor ordered a meeting of his worſhipful brethren, to conſider of this important offer, and make a proper choice; when, after a deliberate conſultation, which laſted till midnight, pictures carried the day againſt bells and organ *nemine contradicente*. They were accordingly painted, and placed in the hall, where they hang to this day, as monuments of their ridiculous pride and folly; by which means, the vices and miſdemeanors of many of them, with the abject and ſcandalous pedigrees of others, are frequently revived when they are exhibited to enquiring ſtrangers; which,

which, otherwiſe, might have reſted in ſilence, or been buried in oblivion. But to return to our hiſtory.

Mr. Southern lived in the ancient family-manſion, which had neither elegance nor grandeur to boaſt of, on account of its antiquity. Yet, from the extenſive circumference, and elevated ſituation, it made a very reſpectable appearance. Though it wanted the beauties of modern architecture, the deficiency was amply compenſated by the goodneſs of its inhabitants; who made it the houſe of hoſpitality, from whence the indigent and diſtreſſed met with kindneſs and relief, nor was the wearied and benighted traveller ever denied a friendly entrance.

At the age of eighteen, he married the daughter of a neighbouring gentleman, in obedience to his father's commands, who had no other object in view, than that of aggrandizing his ſon's fortune, and ſettling an alliance with a family equal with his own, for antiquity and public reſpect; circumſtances, which he conſidered as the moſt material points. Mr. Southern was an only ſon, and his wife an only daughter, ſo that by this union, two capital fortunes would at laſt centre in one; a conſideration in which the old folks exulted not a little. The match was propoſed, agreed to, and ſettled by the old gentlemen, without conſulting the parties more particularly concerned, or paying the leaſt regard to the inclination, or mutual affection of the young couple. The whole was kept

a ſecret

a ſecret till the lands were conveyed, the eſtates joined, and the parchments ſealed; they were then made acquainted with the treaty, and ordered to ratify it, on pain of diſinheritance on both ſides.

As they were nearly of the ſame age, and agreeable in their perſons, it ſo happened that neither made the leaſt objection; eſpecially, as they conſidered it their duty to pay ſtrict obedience to the injunctions of their parents. Thus they married, becauſe they were told they ſhould; and became man and wife, without either love or hatred to each other: but being totally unhackneyed in the vices of the world, and ſtrangers to every thing but perfect innocence, they underſtood this connection as a matter of courſe, and ſuppoſed it to be legal

legal and right, ſince it was ſettled by thoſe, whom they imagined knew what was beſt for them. Familiarity, and that more than inſtinctive principle, which renders perſons of a different ſex moſt agreeable to each other, inſpired mutual eſteem, friendſhip and love; and time ſoon produced thoſe endearing pledges, which ſeldom or ever fail to cement the union of marriage by the ſtrongeſt of all obligations.

It is very probable many of our readers, who are acquainted with the general conduct of what is commonly called the *great world*, will think it ſtrange and romantic, that a treaty of marriage, made without the conſent of the parties to be connected by it, ſhould produce a happy effect; eſpecially, as we frequently ſee inſtances, where perſons are miſerable

ſerable in the marriage ſtate, though it has been their own choice, and the reſpective parties the objects of each other's love. It is undoubtedly difficult to reaſon upon caſes of this nature; notwithſtanding which, it is not more ſtrange than true, that where the human mind is uncorrupted by the vices and follies of libertiniſm and licentiouſneſs, or, the influence of bad examples, we ſeldom deviate from thoſe genuine principles of ſociability and friendſhip, virtue and love, ſo ſtrongly implanted in our minds, by the great author of our beings. And, here we cannot help remarking, that, though a knowledge of the world is one of the moſt noble and deſirable purſuits we can poſſibly engage in, yet, numberleſs examples perpetually convince us, that it is often dan-

dangerous to know too much. The reaſon of this is obvious, becauſe few have either the prudence, or the virtue, to apply that knowledge to the intereſts of humanity, or the attainment of ultimate happineſs.

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

The Character of Mr. Southern, and his Family.

HAVING given a general character of Mr. Southern's anceſtors, we ſhall endeavour to draw the portraits of that gentleman and his family, as they are perſons very materially concerned in the tranſactions of this hiſtory.

Mr. Southern inherited all thoſe virtues, which had rendered the memory of his progenitors ſacred; notwithſtanding which, ſome few peculiarities in his temper and diſpoſition were very reprehenſible. He held the fame and importance of his anceſtors in the higheſt eſtimation,

eſtimation, which led him to conſider himſelf of more conſequence to the world, than was generally imagined by others; hence he was frequently haughty and imperious. But theſe blemiſhes were greatly overbalanced by a generous diſpoſition, and good-will to mankind, very diſtinguiſhable in the conduct of all his actions.

He enjoyed a plentiful fortune, which he conſidered as a bleſſing, where it gave him an opportunity of relieving the diſtreſſed, and diffuſing pleaſure and happineſs to thoſe around him in a leſs exalted ſituation: a virtue, which few poſſeſs, whoſe minds have been debauched by a commerce with mankind. It muſt, indeed, be acknowledged, that he was very obſtinate, and greatly addicted to paſſion; a circumſtance we record with

ſome

ſome regret, as the moſt reproachable part of his character. This unhappy foible was conſidered as a misfortune, even by himſelf; becauſe it frequently led him to the commiſſion of many acts, which his virtue, at the return of reaſon, obliged him to acknowledge with compunction: the certain conſequence of ſuffering ourſelves to be inflamed at the firſt touch of provocation, without proportioning our anger to the cauſe, or regulating it by the dictates of prudence.—

The indulgence of his parents in his youth, had prevented his making any great progreſs in thoſe branches of learning, which cultivate a knowledge of men and things; the want of which, with his having lived a retired life in the country, rendered his ideas extremely

tremely circumſcribed: and, being intirely unacquainted with thoſe pleaſing arts of accommodation, which generally demand attention, and create eſteem, he frequently was obliged to ſupply the deficiency, by an abruptneſs of behaviour, that too often precluded him from thoſe advantages he otherwiſe might have enjoyed, in his converſe with men of ſuperior underſtanding and abilities. However, though he was neither a man of refined ſenſe, nor an accompliſhed gentleman, he poſſeſſed moſt of thoſe virtues, which owe their riſe to the genuine dictates of nature, before ſhe is corrupted by the ſeductions of vice, or the influence of bad examples. In ſhort, he had a portion of knowledge ſufficient to make him a kind huſband, an indulgent father, an hoſpitable neighbour,

bour, a generous friend, and a good chriſtian.

The amuſements the country afforded, engaged moſt of his attention, for he hated reading; but his favourite diverſion was that of hunting; for which purpoſe he kept a pack of hounds, and they were univerſally allowed to be the beſt in the whole county. His afternoons were uſually ſpent in drinking and ſmoaking, with ſuch of his neighbours as loved and followed the chace. But, though he delighted to enjoy his pipe and his bottle, he never drank to any great exceſs, except now and then, among his brethren of the bench, at their public meetings; for you muſt know, reader, the 'Squire was one of the Quorum. He was always beſt pleaſed if Mrs. Southern, and her female friends, retired

from

from table after dinner, when the cloth was removed; and has been known to declare, that the women always interrupted the pleaſures of the bottle.

In the early part of his time, he had ſhewn great love for his wife, even to a reproach among ſome of his own ſex; but as years increaſed, and he became enamoured with the pleaſures of hunting, he, in ſome degree, threw off the lover; notwithſtanding which, he ſtill preſerved the friend.

Mrs. Southern, was one of thoſe aimable, good women, deſigned by providence for domeſtic happineſs. Hence, her ideas of pleaſure were limited to a few particulars; and thoſe, all centered in the felicity of her family. So conſiſtent was her whole conduct with the duties

of her ſtation, that ſhe enjoyed the pleaſures of ſelf-approbation, and the applauſe of a good conſcience: the genuine ſource of content and tranquillity.

Though ſhe was a prudent woman, and a great œconomiſt, yet, as ſhe poſſeſſed the means, ſhe wanted not the inclination to do good to thoſe around her, but ſhe was particularly attentive to extend her charity to proper objects; by which precaution, ſhe very often enhanced the importance of it. The common, wandering beggar, was her ſcorn, ſo that her bounty ſeldom became a prey to impoſture. She ſought for objects to enjoy the fruits of her benevolence, among the laborious poor; and, ſuch as ſuffered the calamities of diſtreſs from ſickneſs, unforeſeen accidents, or the cravings of a numerous family. To

theſe ſhe proportioned her liberality, according to the circumſtance and ſituation of their wants; and this, from a principle of humanity, wholly free from pride and oſtentation.

She ſpent the principal part of her time, in the management of her domeſtic affairs, to which ſhe paid the ſtricteſt attention; and by way of amuſement, at her leiſure hours, ſtudied phyſic, or rather, the art of making family medicines, with the knowledge of their uſe and application. Theſe ſhe diſtributed to the poor, gratis; by which means, ſhe ſaved many the expence of an apothecary; a circumſtance, the lower claſs of people are very rarely able to ſupport. So great was her ſkill in this art, that ſhe has been known to cure many diſeaſes, after the patients have been given

over by the faculty. This has frequently been attended with ſome circumſtances, not ſo agreeable as might have been expected; for though by this means, ſhe procured the bleſſings of thoſe ſhe reſtored to health, ſhe very often incurred the envy and malevolence of the phyſical tribe; who, when they find their art baffled by the obſtinacy, or precarioufneſs of a malady, think it an infringement of their rights and privileges, if their patients are prevented from dying, *ſecundem artem.*

Among the numerous good qualities Mrs. Southern poſſeſſed, ſhe was remarkable for making it the rule of her conduct, to obey the commands of her huſband with the utmoſt exactneſs, however contrary to her wiſhes, or opinion: nor did ſhe ever remark any of his peculiarities

culiarities of temper, either to his diſadvantage, or the detriment of her own peace of mind. How happy would it be, for moſt married women, could they accommodate themſelves, with any degree of cheerfulneſs and eaſe, to the foibles of their huſbands, without endeavouring to reform them by reproach and cenſure; ſince a very little obſervation, would convince them of the dangers of oppoſition; which too often inflames the mind to a pitch of extravagance, not eaſily extinguiſhed, to the deſtruction of that domeſtic happineſs it means to eſtabliſh; and which might have been accompliſhed, by truſting to the happy effects of reflection; ſo ſoon brought about, by the inconveniences thoſe foibles occaſion.

Mrs. Southern had bleſt the marriage ſtate with ſix children; but only two of them ſurvived their infancy. Of theſe, the eldeſt was a daughter, not more celebrated for her beauty, than the perfections of her mind; the particulars of which, we ſhall have occaſion to enumerate hereafter. The youngeſt was a ſon, but not very accompliſhed; for though Mr. Southern with-held no expence for his education, his indolence prevented his making any great progreſs; not to ſay a word of his want of capacity. In ſhort, he was a booby, in the moſt extenſive ſenſe of the term, inheriting all his father's oddities, without the leaſt tincture of his virtues; while his ſiſter was in poſſeſſion of all her mother's amiable qualifications, with the addition of moſt of thoſe accompliſhments

pliſhments which adorn and embelliſh the human mind, and by ſoftening the cares of life, render its heavieſt calamities ſupportable.

CHAP. IV.

A Picture of Matrimony in High Life; with an Account of a very romantic Lady, whose Character and Conduct will not do any great Credit to this History.

MR. Southern had an only ſiſter, who lived at a pleaſant villa, about the diſtance of a mile from his houſe. This lady, had been taken to London in her infancy, by a ſiſter of her father's, who had the good luck to marry a baronet of great fortune, and conſiderable rank among the miniſterial people of his days. He had married her for the beauties of her perſon, which, loſing their importance, in his opinion, as they became more familiar, ſoon

ſoon ceaſed to ſecure either his affection, or his conſtancy; and finding the pleaſures of reality inadequate to thoſe of the imagination, he flew to other objects abroad, for that ſatisfaction he might have enjoyed at home; and became a man of gallantry and intrigue, in the worſt ſenſe of the terms, without reſtraint or limitation. Thus, we ſee, that happineſs in the marriage ſtate, is ſeldom permanent, when fixed on ſo fragile a baſis, as that of beauty.

When the lady found herſelf neglected, and that, without any apparent reaſon, ſhe was ſoon fired with the ſpirit of reſentment, and became regardleſs of that ſocial intercourſe, which is the only true ſupport of conjugal felicity, reſigning herſelf up to the tempting ſolicitations of lawleſs pleaſures; by which means,

ſhe revenged his infidelity with the loſs of her own honour: a dangerous, as well as an unwarrantable revenge, founded on the moſt pernicious principles; ſince no behaviour of a huſband can vindicate a wife in revenging her cauſe upon herſelf, by parting with that moſt valuable jewel, her innocence; the faithful protector of every female virtue.—But to return to our hiſtory.

As the baronet met with no oppoſition from his lady, in the indulgence of his own intrigues, he was very indifferent in reſpect to her conduct, and ſuffered her to purſue her inclinations without reſtraint; nor, did this change make the leaſt alteration in their other affairs: they ſtill lived together in the ſame houſe, on terms of good-nature and friendſhip; and being both ſufficiently

ciently ſkilled in thoſe arts of accommodation and addreſs, ſo peculiar to perſons in high life, they always met in public with cheerfulneſs, and ſupported an appearance of eſteem and love, though they were ſenſible of each other's infidelity. His plentiful fortune, excluſive of the emoluments of his poſts under the government, enabled him to ſupport the dignity of his rank and title, with great ſplendor; which he did on the part of his lady, with as much profuſion, as in what reſpected himſelf; for though they had both equally diſſolved thoſe endearing ties, which are the very eſſence of the marriage union, as he had been the firſt aggreſſor, he wanted not the generoſity to ſupport her conſequence as his wife; and in ſhort, went ſo far, as even to aſſiſt her in the indulgence of thoſe pleaſures, which rendered every

method of reconcilement and re-union impoſſible. But this cannot be a matter of wonder; for, when once we break through the bounds of moral rectitude, every extravagant act ſoon becomes natural and familiar.

We cannot help remarking here, that the conduct of this extraordinary couple, is no bad picture of the matrimonial ſtate in high life, in theſe days; only, they had the prudence to conceal their folly from the world, while our modern adulterers obſerve a leſs friendly rule, in obtaining acts of divorcement; which are frequently ſolicited on falſe pretences, with no other view, than that of enabling one, or both of the parties, to purſue the enjoyment of lawleſs pleaſures with impunity.

Begging pardon of the reader for this digreſſion, we ſhall proceed with the hiſtory, by informing him, that thoſe differences betwixt the baronet and his lady, juſt related, made no alteration in Miſs Southern's ſituation with her aunt: on the contrary, he was paſſionately fond of her, as well as her aunt, and extravagantly liberal in the indulgence of every thing, which could poſſibly contribute either to her amuſement, or her happineſs. This inconſiderate kindneſs was extended beyond the limits of prudence, in numberleſs inſtances; but in none more improperly, than in making her the conſtant companion of themſelves, and their gay aſſociates. By being witneſs to a continual ſcene of diſſipation and exceſs, ſhe ſoon became acquainted with the follies and vices of

thoſe

thoſe in high life; and in a ſhort time, was finely trained in the ſchool of iniquity. Hence, ſhe began to languiſh for illicit pleaſures, before her age had rendered her capable of enjoying them. The certain fatal conſequence of placing bad examples before young minds; which take poſſeſſion of the heart by a kind of violence, and produce the moſt dangerous effects, almoſt without the intervention of the will.

Among the number of the baronet's gay viſitants, a young nobleman, of conſiderable rank and figure in the polite world, whoſe name was Villars, became enamoured with Miſs Southern's youth and ſprightlineſs of diſpoſition; for, it could not ariſe from her beauty, becauſe ſhe did not poſſeſs any, nor was ſhe at all handſome. Being a man of gallantry,

lantry, he had acquired great ſkill in the knowledge of the fair-ſex; and having obſerved, in the young lady, ſome of thoſe impulſes of nature, which diſcover the diſpoſition of the mind, and ſituation of the heart, by a certain poſition of the eyes, or ſudden bluſhings on the cheek; he watched them with great attention at every opportunity, till he was fully ſatisfied, that neither his perſon, or addreſſes would be diſagreeable to her. He accordingly made a declaration of his love, in form, and inforced it with unremitting ardour, till the tender-hearted female promiſed to reward his paſſion, by being his, and only his, after the ancient manner of making love among the nymphs and ſwains of Arcadia. To ſay the truth, a more experienced practitioner in the art of love, than Miſs Southern, might have

have found a difficulty in giving a denial to ſuch a man as Lord Villars; for, excluſive of many ſingular accompliſhments, nature had been very liberal of her graces and perfections, in the formation of his perſon.

Theſe preliminaries being ſettled to their mutual ſatisfaction, his lordſhip enjoined her to ſecrecy, not knowing what reception this proceeding might meet with from her aunt, if diſcovered. To this the young lady readily agreed, not from the reaſon aſſigned above, but two others. The firſt, as the ſecrecy of their intentions rendered them the more romantic; a circumſtance of great importance to one whoſe mind was filled with nothing but extravagant ideas. The ſecond, becauſe, according to the old ſaying, "Stolen joys

joys are ſweeteſt." An aſſertion, never fully explained, or ſufficiently accounted for, by any of the ancient, or modern philoſophers.

Their meetings were now very frequent, and like thoſe of all lovers at the firſt ſetting out, employed in making vows and proteſtations of the immutability of their love, and reſolution to preſerve eternal conſtancy; ſwearing to the ſincerity of their intentions, by earth, ſeas, ſkies, the ſun, moon, ſtars, &c. &c. &c.

That their love was not only reciprocal, but fervent, the reader can have no reaſon to doubt, when he is informed, that on the morning of that very day, Miſs Southern attained the age of ſixteen, ſhe was ſafely delivered of a male child,

child, in as peaceable a manner as ever good lady was, though without the aſſiſtance of a midwife, to the ſurpriſe and confuſion of her aunt and the whole family. But what contributed moſt to the perplexity of this affair, was the young lady's proteſtations of her innocence; which not only enraged her aunt, * but occaſioned every male creature in the houſe to be accuſed, the Baronet himſelf not excepted.

Things remained in this ſtate for many days, till at laſt, time, the great diſcoverer of all ſecrets, hinted, that

* Had the good lady known what Virgil ſays in his Georgics, concerning the prolific power of the weſt wind; or, ever peruſed a letter, addreſſed to the Royal Society, intitled, "Lucina ſine Concubita," ſhe probably might have been ſatisfied with her niece's proteſtations of innocence.

Lord

Lord Villars was the guilty perſon. This conjecture aroſe from his ceaſing to viſit the family, as he had conſtantly done before this event happened. As ſoon as this thought ſtruck the Baronet and his lady, they began to recollect many circumſtances, which confirmed them in the opinion of his lordſhip's being the father of the new-born infant; ſuch as the frequency of his viſits, his fondneſs of their niece, and her great familiarity with him; particulars, which they ſuffered to paſs unnoticed when they happened, being wholly attentive to ſuch things, as alone concerned the gratification of their own depraved ſenſations. So loſt is the mind to the good of others, when once it is engaged in an unbounded purſuit after pleaſure and diſſipation.

They

They waited on his lordſhip, and, without any ceremony, charged him with the ſeduction of their niece, which he inſtantly acknowledged; and, with an affected air of pleaſantry, ſaid, it was a fooliſh thing to be ſure; that, Miſs Southern was a ſilly girl; that, what was done, could not be undone; and, therefore, he would adviſe them to huſh the matter up as quietly as they could, for their own ſakes; for, as it was the effect of the young lady's own imprudence, it no way concerned him, except providing for the child, which, when he had done, he ſhould not perplex himſelf any further about it.

The Baronet was highly provoked at this indifference, and inſiſted, that he ſhould repair Miſs Southern's diſhonour, by marrying her. To this, his lordſhip anſwered,

anſwered, he would take the girl into keeping, if they choſe it, but that matrimony was his averſion, being inconſiſtent with all the articles of modern pleaſure, and conſequently deſtructive of that freedom, which of right belonged to men in exalted ſtations; and then quoted their own conduct, as a defence of his argument. Here, the Baronet and his lady, felt the bitterneſs of their folly very ſenſibly, and beheld in its true light, the turpitude of thoſe vices encouraged by perſons of diſtinction; who, being independent of the leſſer cares of life, from their ſituations, ſeldom pay a proper regard to thoſe moral duties, which are the very cement and band of ſociety. From that moment, they looked forward, in ſearch of virtue; and though they ſaw her afar off, the conſideration of their

paſt

paſt miſconduct, made them reſolve to tread in her paths; till, by reformation and repentance, they ſhould be enabled to render themſelves worthy of becoming votaries at her ſhrine.

The offspring of Miſs Southern's precipitate love, was ſoon ſent to the author of its exiſtence, who, through pride, diſpoſed of it with the ſtricteſt privacy, in order to conceal his own ſhame; however, his fears on that head were ſoon at an end, for, according to the beſt accounts, it did not long ſurvive the ſeparation from its mother.

The Baronet and his lady, ſtung by the recollection of their paſt errors, and eager to purſue their plan of returning to innocence and virtue, conſidered, that, the moſt effectual method of accompliſhing

compliſhing this great end, would be, to quit London, the reſidence of all their gay aſſociates, and the ſeat of thoſe deſtructive pleaſures, which had led them aſtray from the paths of moral rectitude. They accordingly retired to a country ſeat of the Baronet's, in Bedfordſhire, and bid adieu to the gay world, and all its deluſive pleaſures. To this retreat Miſs Southern accompanied them, not from inclination, but compulſion; her father, who died about two years before, having, by will, conſigned her to their care; for retirement, was by no means, agreeable to a diſpoſition like her's, having been trained, from her infancy, in the ſchool of gaiety and diſſipation. Nor was it eaſy, for one of her years, to blot from remembrance, thoſe pleaſing ideas ſo naturally raiſed in the mind, by the

object of a firſt love. And, though Lord Villars had forfeited all pretenſions to her regard, he ſtill, at times, appeared amiable in her eyes. So great is the force of female partiality, in caſes of this nature.

Her uncle and aunt, perſevered in their reſolution with the moſt rigid accuracy, and ſoon gave the world a convincing proof of the ſincerity of their intentions, by becoming as illuſtrious for their love of virtue, as they had formerly been remarkable for an attachment to the follies and vices of a corrupt and degenerate age. But, alas! How ſhort-lived is all human felicity! Scarcely had they begun to know the true value of the bleſſings of this life, and to enjoy them in a manner becoming the dignity of rational beings, before death

death fixed the period of all their good deſigns: which will teach us, that pleaſures are more ſafely poſtponed than virtues.

The Baronet enjoyed his happy retreat but five years, and at his death, left his lady a very conſiderable fortune; who, ſurviving him but a few months, bequeathed it to her niece.

CHAP. V.

The Hiſtory of Miſs Southern continued.

MISS Southern, would undoubtedly, have been greatly affected by the loſs of the Baronet and his lady, had not their ſudden retreat from the gay world, and all its vanities, too precipitately checked that thirſt after pleaſure and diſſipation, which they had encouraged by the example of their own conduct; and whoſe rigid obſervance of the precepts of virtue, in their ſtate of ſequeſtration, in a great meaſure, prevented the good effect it might have had with their niece; for it is very certain, that, if virtue wants the ornament of ſuperficial attractions, ſhe

ſhe fails of being pleaſing in the approach, and, therefore, ſeldom excites the mind to imitate her perfections. The truth of theſe obſervations will be ſufficiently manifeſt, by the conduct of Miſs Southern; who ſuſtained the loſs of her friends with an indifference, bordering upon inſenſibility; while her eager deſire to return to the follies of the gay world, was a convincing proof, that, the violence with which they enforced their documents, had very little influence over her paſſions and inclinations. She beheld their departure with unconcern, becauſe it delivered her from the ſeverities of humiliation, which ſhe conſidered as worſe than an Egyptian bondage.

She was now her own miſtreſs, without reſtriction; and poſſeſſed of a very

large fortune at her own diſpoſal, being of age. She therefore, determined to enjoy her wiſhes, without attending to the opinion of the world, or ſuffering it to influence the conduct of her actions. With this view, ſhe left the country as ſoon as ſhe conveniently could ſettle her affairs, and returned to London, in ſearch of Lord Villars, the perfidious deſtroyer of her innocence; whoſe ſemblance ſtill haunted her imagination, and whoſe crime, in her breaſt, had loſt its poignancy. On inquiry, ſhe found, that, having ſquandered the greateſt part of his fortune in debauchery and exceſs, and incurred the reſentment of a noble lord, by boaſting of an illicit converſe with his ſiſter, which reſentment he wanted courage to withſtand, he had collected together the ſhattered remains of his effects, and retired

retired to ſome neighbouring kingdom, with the ſtricteſt privacy, in order to avoid that ſhame, and that puniſhment, he ſo juſtly merited.

This unexpected diſappointment, was the occaſion of ſome uneaſineſs, for ſhe hoped, after an abſence of almoſt ſix years, to have found him ready to make reparation for the injury ſhe had ſuffered, by marrying her; eſpecially, as the importance of her fortune promiſed to facilitate the accompliſhment of ſuch a deſign; not, that ſhe knew the minuteſt circumſtance relative to his ſituation, or his affairs, during her reſidence in the country; ſo diligent had her friends been, to prevent all correſpondence betwixt them.

Deprived of all hopes of recovering the traitor to her peace of mind, ſhe reſolved to ſeek for conſolation among the pleaſurable amuſements of the town; for which purpoſe, ſhe took an elegant houſe, furniſhed it in a very ſuperb manner, ſet up a ſplendid equipage, and ſolicited the acquaintance of the gay, the thoughtleſs, and the vain. With theſe, ſhe went through every extravagant ſcene of folly and diſſipation; and, from her youth and inexperience, ſoon became the dupe of every artifice, and the ſlave of every impoſition.

She purſued this track of life, more than fifteen years, till at laſt, ſhe found herſelf the ſubject of ridicule and contempt, even among them who reaped every poſſible advantage from her follies: ſo loſt to every generous ſentiment

are

are they, that devote their lives to the indulgence of lawleſs pleaſures, and the extravagance of exceſs. Rouſed by the perfidy of her ungrateful aſſociates, the paſſion of reſentment ſoon extirpated all deſire for the enjoyments of the gay world, ſurrounded with ſo many deluſions; and hence, ſhe renounced her abſurd courſe of life. And, as the violence of her temper, did not ſuffer her indignation to ſubſide, ſhe immediately reſolved to quit London, and retire to her native country, in ſearch of happineſs. With this view, ſhe diſpoſed of her effects, and poſted to Coventry, with the utmoſt impatience; where ſhe was received by her brother and his family, with thoſe ſincere expreſſions of joy, and friendſhip, which owe their riſe to the genuine dictates of natural affection, diveſted of intereſted views.

She was highly pleaſed with the conduct of her brother's family, which appeared to derive its domeſtic happineſs, from that ſimplicity of manners, and uncorrupted innocence, ſhe beheld throughout the whole. But, what moſt attracted her obſervation, was his daughter, whoſe beauty, and accompliſhments, greatly raiſed her admiration. To her, ſhe inſtantly became attached, and promiſed to give her a fortune, provided her father and mother choſe to reſign her to her care; a requeſt which was readily complied with.

As ſhe fancied, that in this retreat, ſhe ſhould enjoy that happineſs ſhe had ſo long failed of attaining, ſhe built herſelf a pleaſing villa, about the diſtance of a mile from her brother's houſe, as, has been obſerved before. To this

place,

place, ſhe retired, taking her niece for a companion, fully reſolved to ſpend the remainder of her days in the moſt perfect tranquillity. But, alas! ſhe ſoon found, that it was out of the power of particular ſtations and places to beſtow happineſs. This ſudden retreat, was by no means ſuitable to a mind like her's, trained up in the noiſe and buſtle of the gay world.

Diſappointed in her views of content and happineſs, from the inſtability of her own mind, ſhe was ſoon diſſatisfied with every thing around her; and became impatient of contradiction, inſolent to ſuch as acknowledged her ſuperiority, and ſullen and malignant to thoſe who left her unnoticed. When any thing particularly croſſed her, Mr. Southern and his family were ſure to feel

the effects of it; over whom, ſhe ruled with deſpotic authority, becauſe ſhe had it in her power to leave them a large fortune: a conſideration, which induced them to ſubmit to her dominion. Thus, though ſhe enjoyed the means of being happy from an affluence almoſt unlimited, ſhe defeated its power by the perverſity of her diſpoſition, and had the mortification of beholding herſelf wealthy without followers, magnificent without witneſſes, and important without dignity.

Harraſſed and diſtracted with the tortures of diſcontent, ſhe frequently entertained thoughts of returning to London again, in ſearch of happineſs; but having enjoyed all the pleaſures of the maſquerade of high life, in the utmoſt extreme, ſhe found, on recollection, that they were inſufficient, either to awaken curioſity,

curioſity, or encourage the deſire of repetition: ſo much do all pleaſurable ſenſations depend upon novelty, which, when gratified, is ſoon found to be volatile, and eaſily diſſipated; hence, the inceſſant call for variety, and reſtleſs purſuit after enjoyments, only deſirable while they are unpoſſeſſed.

Wearied with the perplexity of fixing on ſome plan, which might abate the perturbation of her mind, ſhe at laſt, reſolved to reſume one of her juvenile amuſements; that of reading books of romance, and poetry. A ſcheme, ſeemingly pregnant with an inexhauſtible fund of pleaſure and variety, and therefore promiſed to afford infinite happineſs; which led her to congratulate herſelf upon the wiſdom of her choice. On what trifles do we often build the foundation of our felicities! However,

to perſons independent of the leſſer cares of life, amuſements like theſe, have their uſe and importance, for whatever buſies the mind without corrupting it, ſecures us from the evils attendant upon idleneſs; and they that are ſeldom idle, have few opportunities of becoming vicious.

Eager to put this plan in execution, a ſtudy was immediately erected on the top of the houſe, for the ſake of privacy; which, was ſoon filled with a variety of books, calculated to produce the promiſed pleaſure. Here, ſhe retired every day, and received that ſatisfaction ſhe wiſhed to enjoy; but, by a conſtant peruſal of the fictions of poets, and the extravagance of romance writers, ſhe acquired a wildneſs in her looks, and manner, which, added to an affected

affected ſingularity of dreſs, made the common country people believe her a witch, or a ſorcereſs, from whoſe approach they fled, as they would have done from a ghoſt. This circumſtance, was the ſubject of much mirth to Mr. Southern, who, was highly pleaſed with his ſiſter's being taken for a conjurer.

It is neceſſary in this place to obſerve, that ſoon after the good lady had devoted herſelf to this amuſement, ſhe choſe to give an air of romance to every thing; and among many other whimſies, ſtiled her villa, *The Caſtle of Contentment*; at the ſame time, giving orders to be called the governeſs of it; by which appellation we ſhall diſtinguiſh her in the continuation of this hiſtory.

As to her niece, ſhe amuſed herſelf by playing on the harpſicord, and ſometimes with reading; and having obſerved her aunt's turn of mind, ſhe endeavoured to accommodate herſelf to it, with a cheerfulneſs, and affability, as ſingular as pleaſing. It muſt, indeed, be confeſſed, that gratitude demanded this of her, for amidſt all her aunt's romantic conduct, ſhe ſhewed a paſſionate fondneſs for her, as well as an unwearied attention to whatever could contribute to her happineſs.

CHAP.

CHAP. VI.

Which introduces the Hero of this Hiſtory.

IT was the practice of the writers of ancient romances, to introduce their heroes, and principal perſonages, by ſome ſupernatural, or extraordinary means, in which, all the powers of invention were diſplayed, and the wonderful and marvelous extended to their utmoſt limits; till loſing ſight of probability, they impoſed the moſt monſtrous hyperboles on their credulous readers. Thus, if the hero was a deity, he uſually deſcended on a cloud, ſurrounded by celeſtial ſpirits, who condeſcended to tune their golden viols to amuſe him on his journey; if a lover, he

he came winging through the air in a gilded chariot, drawn by doves, or ſparrows, attended by Venus, and a train of pretty, little, ſmiling Cupids; if a warrier, he generally made his entry in a triumphant car, dragged by ſlaves in chains, taken priſoners in the field of battle, amidſt crouds of adoring ſuppliants, or the acclamations of a giddy mob, whoſe enthuſiaſtic vociferations, out ſounded the martial muſic of his drums and trumpets. But, as this wild ſtrain of imagination has long ſince been exploded by the polite, and the learned, we chuſe to introduce our hero, by a method more natural, as well as more modern. In ſhort, not to keep the reader any longer in ſuſpenſe, he made his entry into Coventry in a—ſtage-coach; an inſtrument of conveyance, in every reſpect preferable to the machines

machines and expedients of the heroic romance.

Before we proceed any further, it will be neceſſary to inform the reader, that our hero is a clergyman; and, that his coming to Coventry, was occaſioned by the death of the curate of the pariſh where Mr. Southern lived, the rector of which reſiding at Oxford, had ſent this gentleman down to fill the vacancy. Having brought letters of recommendation from the rector, to Mr. Southern and his ſiſter, they being the moſt reſpectable perſons in the pariſh, he waited on the 'Squire as ſoon as he arrived, and delivered his credentials; who received him with the greateſt cheerfulneſs and hoſpitality; ſwearing by Juno (his uſual oath) that he was glad he was come, not having ſmoaked

one

one comfortable pipe ſince the curate died; concluding all, with deſiring Mr. Myrtle, for that was his name, to make his houſe, his home at all times, as his predeceſſor had done. To this mark of civility, the Curate returned the moſt grateful acknowledgments, but ſaid, "He could not think of taking ſuch a liberty with a ſtranger." "O, ho! you can't," cried the 'Squire, "Why then by Juno, you ſhall preach to the clerk and the ſexton, for me, I'll aſſure thee. Odd's heart, what doſt thou mean, man? The family of the Southerns, have always been friends to the clergy; beſides, you'll not be able to ſettle yourſelf in the parſonage theſe three months; ſo ſet your heart at reſt, for here you ſhall ſtay, that's poz. Ne'er ſtand upon compliments and ceremony, thou ſhalt be welcome, and that's every thing.

thing. All I aſk in return, is, not to make your ſermons too long-winded, eſpecially in cold weather. Enough's as good as a feaſt; a little at a time will laſt the longer. No man loves religion better than I do, but too much of one thing ſpoils all."

The Curate could not help ſmiling at the 'Squire's blunt ſimplicity, and aſſured him, he ſhould make it the ſtudy of his life, to fulfill the duties of his ſtation, in ſuch a manner, as he hoped, would give general ſatisfaction to the pariſhioners. "Aye, aye," replied the 'Squire, "No doubt on't, no doubt on't. Be but kind and civil, and let us have our own way, and you'll do well enough amongſt us, I'll warrant you. But a pox on ſome of your black coats, they will take a little too much upon 'em,

'em, and that won't do, for we know what's what, as well as they do, though we mayn't have ſo much learning."

Supper now making its appearance, Mrs. Southern, her ſon, and his tutor, were introduced to the Curate by the 'Squire, who told them who the gentleman was, and deſired they would welcome him to Coventry. As ſoon as this ceremony was over, the tutor, who was a clergyman, aſked the Curate if he came from Oxford, knowing the rector of the pariſh reſided there. Myrtle replied, "Not immediately, Sir; on my quitting Oxford, I went to London, where I paſſed a few days with a friend, before I ſet out for this place." "What! have you been to London, Sir?" cried the ſon, whoſe name was Philip, "well, I wiſh I had been with you, for I long to

ſee

ſee the lions, and the tower, and the monument, and St. Pauls, and the player-folks, that I do." "Hold your tongue, child," ſaid Mrs. Southern, "and don't run on ſo." "Lord, ma'am," cried Philip, "you'll never let a-body ſpeak; I'm ſure it's a burning ſhame, as I'm a gentleman's ſon, not to have ſeen London, when farmer Fairfield's ſon has been there twice, and he's but two years older than I am." "Aye, aye, all in good time, Phil," cried the 'Squire, "you're too young to go to ſuch places yet; mind your ſtudies boy, for a year or two longer, and you ſha'n't want for indulgence." "Yes, ſo it's a ſign," replied the ſon, "when mother would not let me go but once to the play, when the actors were at Coventry, becauſe I went behind the ſcenes, and ſpoke to the young lady that played *Cherry*, the landlord's

landlord's daughter. Well, by geminy, ſhe was a ſweet pretty creature, that ſhe was, and as handſome as ſiſter to the full, had ſhe been dreſſed as well." "Mercy on me!" ſaid the mother, "I'm aſtoniſhed to hear the boy talk ſo rudely; hold your tongue, ſirrah, or I ſhall turn you out of the room." "Come, come, madam," cried the tutor, "with ſubmiſſion, let me adviſe you, not to be ſo violent; maſter's a fine youth, and if you check him too much, you'll damp his genius; leave him to me, and don't give yourſelf any uneaſineſs, he will do very well by and by, never fear." "Piſh," cried the 'Squire, "let's have no more of this nonſenſe, the boy will do well enough, ſo Sir, your health," addreſſing himſelf to the Curate; "to-morrow I'll go with you to my ſiſter's, who will be angry if you don't make her a viſit

a viſit before you go to any one elſe in the pariſh; and when once her back's up, it is not ſoon down again, I aſſure you, ſo you muſt take care how you affront her." "Aye, that you muſt," ſaid Maſter Philip, "for if once ſhe's in her trantrums, you had beſt keep out of her way." "She's a ſtrange woman to be ſure," cried the 'Squire, "and has taken it into her head, for theſe four years paſt, to ſtudy romances, and poetry, and books of knight-errantry, till ſhe has almoſt turned her poor brains." "Almoſt, father," replied Philip, "aye, by geminy, quite; or elſe, what does ſhe ſit all day poking in the great room at the top of the caſtle for? There it is, the neighbours ſay, ſhe keeps all her hobgoblins; and like enough, for certain it is, there's conjuration-work going forward ſometimes. I went the other

other day to ſee ſiſter, and finding my aunt was above in her ſtudy, I had a mind to ſee what ſhe was at; ſo I crept ſoftly up ſtairs, and peeped thro' the key-hole, where I could juſt diſcern her walking about the room with a book in her hand, reading to herſelf; when, all on a ſudden, ſhe broke out in a violent manner, calling upon angels and miniſters of grace to defend her; ſo imagining all the devils were let looſe upon her at once, I thought it high time for me to eſcape with a whole ſkin, as faſt as I could." Here his tutor burſt into a loud laugh, and with a look of approbation, cried out, "There's a lad for you, there's a wag, there's a genius! A chip of the old block, Maſter Southern, a chip of the old block, by the Lord Harry." "Well, for my part," ſaid Mrs. Southern, "I wonder you

you are not aſhamed to encourage the boy in ſuch wickedneſs! Sirrah, how dare you talk of your aunt in this manner; and what do you mean, by conjuration, and devils, and all this ſtuff?" "No, Phil," cried the 'Squire, "you are a little out there, I don't think your aunt's a conjurer, any more than myſelf; to be ſure, ſhe does run a-head a little ſometimes, about elves and fairies, and giants and geniis; but theſe are whimſies, mere whimſies, and nothing elſe."

The Curate, who had been ſilent during this converſation, told Maſter Philip, he fancied he could explain the cauſe of what he had juſt mentioned. "From the words you repeated," ſaid he, "it ſeems very probable, that the lady was reading the tragedy of Hamlet, and warmed by the fancy of the poet,

had given utterance to the ſpeech where Hamlet firſt ſees his father's ghoſt."

" Angels and miniſters of grace defend
" us!
" Be thou a ſpirit of health, or goblin
" damn'd,
" Bring with thee airs from heav'n, or
" blaſts from hell,
" Be thy intents wicked or charitable,
" Thou com'ſt in ſuch a queſtionable
" ſhape,
" That I will ſpeak to thee."—

" By Juno," cried the 'Squire, in a rapture, " the Curate has hit the mark, ſo Phil, there's an end to the conjuration. What do you ſay to it, doctor?" To this, the tutor replied, with an air of importance, " Verily, I believe the young man's in the right, the conjecture's good, and I approve of it."

The

The cloth being removed, Mrs. Southern and Maſter Philip withdrew; and pipes and tobacco being ſet on the table, the 'Squire bid the tutor fill away, and offered the Curate a pipe; who ſaid, ſmoaking was a cuſtom he had never practiſed, and therefore begged to be excuſed. "What," cried the tutor, you a clergyman, and not ſmoak? Why, there's no good fellowſhip, or ſociality amongſt men without a pipe of tobacco." "I am ſorry, Sir, to differ in opinion," replied the Curate, "but, I apprehend, ſociality does not alone conſiſt in ſmoaking tobacco." "By my faith, but it does," ſaid the tutor, "and to me, life would be inſufferable without the comforts of the pipe, the bottle, and good company. But, you're a greenhorn, I ſee, and wan't breaking in." "Come, come," ſaid the 'Squire, "don't

be too haſty, doctor, a good huntſman never runs a young hound too hard at firſt; all in good time; we ſhall break him to it by degrees, I'll warrant you." "That's as it may happen," replied the tutor, "now, I'm of a different way of thinking; for if one may judge by phyſiognomy, and I'm pretty well ſkilled in that ſcience, his conſcience is a little too ſqueamiſh; but 'tis the way with all youngſters on their firſt taking orders and quitting college;--- full of thought ---full of gravity---full of virtue---but a little practice ſoon brings them to." To this, the Curate ſaid, with ſome degree of reſolution, that "he hoped, no practice would ever weaken his attachment to virtue, or lead him to be inattentive to thoſe duties which reſpected the good of himſelf and others. And, I am greatly ſurpriſed," continued he, "that

" that men of ſenſe, who ſhould know the value, as well as the ſhortneſs of life, can be ſo regardleſs, as to ſuffer it to paſs away in the enjoyment of fortuitous amuſements; when the excellence at which humanity ſhould endeavour to arrive, is not attainable by a conſtant and determinate purſuit of virtue, without a continual reference of every action to the divine will, and an habitual appeal to everlaſting juſtice."

" By Juno," cried the 'Squire, " he has foiled you now, doctor; I'm afraid you're on the wrong ſide of the hedge, here." Not at all, not at all," replied the other," " it is a pretty flowery ſpeech I confeſs, and delivered with a good emphaſis;---the young man has merit; but let him diſplay it in the pulpit to his auditors, and preach up

virtue till doomſday, he'll find at laſt, that human nature, will be human nature." Aye, that it will," cried the 'Squire, " in ſpite of all you black-coats can ſay; ſo puſh the bottle about, doctor."

The Curate, being greatly fatigued with his journey, deſired leave to retire to reſt, which was readily granted; while the 'Squire and the tutor, determined to ſmoak another pipe, and drink another bottle; which we ſhall leave them to enjoy, and here put an end to this Chapter.

CHAP.

CHAP. VII.

The 'Squire and the Curate make a viſit to the Caſtle of Contentment; whither the reader may accompany them if he chuſes it.

THE next morning the 'Squire conducted the Curate to the caſtle, and, on inquiring for his ſiſter, was informed ſhe had retired to her ſtudy, as was her cuſtom after breakfaſt. Here he was at a ſtand, knowing it was her rule, never to be diſturbed when there, by any one, or on any occaſion; however, after a little pauſe, he determined to break thro' it now, ſuppoſing the circumſtance of introducing the Curate, would amply atone for the breach of cuſtom. He accordingly ventured up, bidding the other follow him, and

knocking at the door with great violence, cried out, "Hillo, ho, ho, hillo;---here he is, here he is, I've brought him." To this he received no anſwer; and therefore, called out as violently as before, "Come, come, open the door, here's none but friends; here's one will lay all your evil ſpirits in the red ſea, if you find them troubleſome, ſo don't be afraid ſiſter." He had hardly pronounced this laſt ſentence, before the lady ran to the door, and opening it, ſaid, "How dare you diſturb me thus, with your diſcordant exclamations; know you not, that this place is devoted to private contemplation?" "Well, don't be in a paſſion ſiſter," replied the 'Squire, "here's our new Curate come to pay his reſpects to you." "Then, the greater brute you," ſaid ſhe, "to introduce him in this booriſh manner." "Piſh," cried the 'Squire,

'Squire, "don't be ſo teſty, there's no harm done that I know of." "But there is," replied the lady, "you ſhould have given me proper notice, that I might have received the gentleman in a manner becoming his dignity and mine. The error is paſt remedy now, and therefore, the gentleman muſt aſcribe it to its proper author." Then turning to the Curate, ſhe ſaid, "Sir, you are welcome to the *Caſtle of Contentment*. I reverence men of your function, becauſe you are ſkilled in the ſcience of literature; but, my brother, here, has no idea of any thing beyond his pipe and his bottle, his dogs and his horſes." The Curate bowed, and returned the compliment, by ſaying, "It gave him the higheſt ſatisfaction, to meet with a lady ſo ſingularly attached to polite learning." "Look ye there now, ſiſter,"

ſaid the 'Squire, "I knew you'd ſoon be friends when once you came to be acquainted; but you are ſo deviliſh paſſionate, there's no knowing how to manage you; by Juno, you will like him hugely, I know, by and by." The Curate ſmiled at the 'Squire's frankneſs of expreſſion, and returned him thanks for his good opinion of him." "Well," ſaid the 'Squire, "I have brought you together, and now I'll leave you to ſettle your compliments and ceremony by yourſelves, while I go and ſee what the butler has got in the pantry." So ſaying, he left the room.

The Curate now delivered his recommendatory letter from the rector, which, being dated from Oxford, led the lady to inquire if he came from that place lately; to which he anſwered in the affirmative.

firmative. "And did you not quit it with reluctance," ſaid ſhe. "I confeſs, madam," replied he, "I did; it being the place where I finiſhed my ſtudies, and qualified myſelf for the great taſk I have undertaken." "O," cried the lady, in a rapture; "it is the circle of ſcience, the ſeat of learning, and the habitation of the Muſes. You are a lover of poetry, no doubt," continued ſhe, "and a poet I preſume?" "I cannot ſay, madam," replied he, "that I dare venture to aſſume that title; for a man ſhould arrive at a very exalted pitch of excellence and perfection, before he has any pretenſions to the name of poet". "You have many good poets at Oxford, Sir," ſaid the lady. "Some, madam," replied the Curate, "but the greateſt beauties in poetry to be met with there, are to be

found among thoſe ſpontaneous flights of fancy, in which the young ſtudents frequently exerciſe their genius. Many of theſe, greatly excel more laboured compoſitions, and want only to be known, to be univerſally admired. During my reſidence at college, I made a large collection of theſe juvenile eſſays, which I ſhall be glad to preſent to you, for your peruſal." O, Sir," ſaid the lady, " you cannot oblige me more; and you have raiſed my curioſity ſo much, that I ſhall be impatient till I ſee them." " I am ſorry, madam," replied he, " I cannot immediately ſatisfy your wiſhes, as my things are not yet arrived at Coventry. At preſent, I have nothing of the kind with me, except a little poetical trifle, written by a young gentleman juſt before I left Oxford." " You will oblige me very much," ſaid the lady, " by favouring

favouring me with a ſight of it." "I cannot ſay much in its favour," ſaid the Curate, "but that it is founded on a circumſtance which really happened in the neighbourhood of the univerſity, and is written with great ſimplicity, which is its only merit." He then took out a pocket-book, and preſented the following little piece, which the lady deſired he would read.

AMYNTOR AND FLORELLA:

A BALLAD.

AMYNTOR lov'd a maiden fair,
Florella was her name;
The youth was blithe and debonair,
The damſel was the ſame.

Of

Of equal worth their parents were,
For actions good and great;
To practice virtue all their care,
Deſpiſing pomp and ſtate.

Fell diſcord's form was never ſeen,
Within their gates to rove;
Or enmity to ſtep between,
And check their friendly love.

O, what a heav'n on earth is this!
Where neighbours thus unite;
Where friendſhip ſpreads her balmy bliſs,
And gives the ſoul delight.

Each view'd their child with tend'reſt love,
The daughter and the ſon;
To join, by marriage bands, they ſtrove,
Two families in one.

No nymph was like Florella ſeen;
Who ſaw her, ſurely lov'd:
And ſuch, Amyntor's graceful mien,
He was by all approv'd.

From childhood they each other knew,
At firſt by friendſhip mov'd:
As years increas'd, they fonder grew,
And found at laſt, they lov'd.

But ſoon, by envy, tales were ſpread,
To give this couple pain;
How he careſs'd ſome other maid,
And ſhe ſome other ſwain.

Some fiend this artifice devis'd----
They quickly jealous grew:
They fear'd, they doubted, they ſurmis'd,
And fancy ſtampt it true.

"What!

" What! is he falſe?" Florella ſaid,
" Whom I believ'd ſo true?
" Does he forſake his faithful maid,
" Some other to purſue?

" Where are the plighted vows he made,
" Ten thouſand times and more?
" When oft beneath the woodbine ſhade,
To conſtancy he ſwore?

" Adieu, thou phantom, happineſs!
" I give thee to the wind:
" No more ſhall love my heart diſtreſs,
" Or man enſlave my mind.

" Some cottage ſhall conceal my ſhame,
" From envy far remov'd,
" Where I'll repeat Amyntor's name,
" Whom once I dearly lov'd.

" Tho'

" Tho' falſe, may he be happy yet,
" And live from anguiſh free:
" I may forgive, but can't forget,
" His cruelty to me."

Then ſtraight ſhe left her father's home,
And ſought a lonely way;
Reſolv'd thro' ſecret paths to roam,
Obſcur'd from open day:

Where haply ſhe might find relief,
From agonizing woe;
Or wait till death ſhould end her grief,
In ſilent ſhades below.—

Her ſudden flight was ſoon made known;
In tears Amyntor ſaid,
" Where is the dear Florella flown,
" And wherefore is ſhe fled?

" Alas!

" Alas! ſhe leaves me thus forlorn,
" To bleſs ſome rival's arms;
" And treats my faithful love with ſcorn:
" The thought my ſoul alarms!

" Is all her kindneſs come to this,
" And thus my love repaid?
" Adieu, fond hope, of endleſs bliſs,
" Adieu, thou fickle maid!

" And tho' forſaken thus, by thee,
" I yet confeſs thy pow'r:
" May he thou ſeek'ſt adore like me,
" And love till life's laſt hour.

" But ſhould the ſwain thou mean'ſt to bleſs,
" Like thee inconſtant prove;
" Thou then wilt know what deep diſtreſs,
" Awaits on ſlighted love.

" May

"May no ſuch torments rend thy breaſt,
"But happy may'ſt thou live;
"And all thoſe bleſſings with thee reſt,
"That love and life can give."

This ſaid,---he ſought, at dead of night,
Thoſe banks where Iſis flows;
Reſolving, ere return of light,
To finiſh all his woes.

There, leaning o'er a poplar bough,
Oppreſs'd with grief he ſtood;
And ſaid, while tears began to flow
Which mingled with the flood;

"Hear, hear, ye gods, my laſt, laſt pray'r!
"The only boon I crave;
"Forgive Florella, perjur'd fair,
"Tho' cruel to her ſlave.

"Should

" Should ſhe relent when 'tis too late,
" And wiſh me to return;
" Conceal from her my hapleſs fate,
" Nor ever let her mourn."

Then bending o'er the river's ſide,
With lifted hands to heav'n;
Before he join'd the rapid tide,
He begg'd to be forgiv'n.

" Forbear, raſh man," a voice now cried,
" You know not what you do;
" Some fiend Florella has belied,
" For ſhe, alas! is true.

" And know, Amyntor, lovely youth,
" Florella now is here;
" To crown thy conſtancy and truth,
" And baniſh ev'ry fear."

" O! well"

" O! well" he ſaid, " I know that voice!
" O extacy divine!
" And is Amyntor ſtill thy choice,
" And wilt thou then be mine?

" And art thou true, thou dear loſt maid?
" What falſehood I believ'd!"
" No more, no more," Florella ſaid,
" We both have been deceiv'd."

" No more, my love, my life," he cry'd,
" Shall jealouſy's alarms,
" This bleſt re-union ere divide."
Then claſp'd her in his arms.

" And now," he ſaid, " in joy and love,
" We'll paſs each fleeting hour;
" And ev'ry heart-felt rapture prove,
" Till life ſhall be no more.

" Well,"

"Well," ſaid the lady, after the Curate had finiſhed the ballad, "I think the poet might have heightened the cataſtrophe greatly, if he had made Amyntor really plunge into the river; as it would have given a ſtronger proof, not only of his diſtreſs, but alſo, of Florella's love, who might have followed immediately, and by receiving him into her own arms, have reſcued him from the arms of death. Or, to have carried it ſtill further, he might have ſuffered them to have floated down the ſtream, till quite ſpent with their endeavours to ſave each other, and juſt on the point of expiring, a fiſherman's boat paſſing by, might have ſaved them both." "But ſuppoſe, madam," ſaid the Curate, ſmiling, "no boat ſhould have paſſed by at that critical minute, the cataſtrophe would then

then have been very tragical indeed?" "Suppoſe me no ſuppoſes," replied the lady, "was it not an eaſy matter, for the poet to have placed a boat on the oppoſite ſide of the river, in readineſs? O, had he done this, it would have been fifty times more romantic." "Why that, indeed, might have been done, madam," ſaid the Curate, "had the ſtory been fictitious, but the poet has here confined himſelf to real circumſtances." "A fig for reality", replied the lady, "nature is too circumſcribed, to preſent the poet with a ſufficient variety of occurrences; but where the mind explores the boundleſs regions of fancy, the invention is unlimited, and hence, there is never wanting, that wonderful aſſemblage of incidents, on which, true pleaſure depends. Beſides, if poets and other writers, were always to relate

relate things juſt as they really happen, the lord have mercy on ſome folks! we ſhould ſoon ſee the world in a ſtate of uproar and confuſion: but, it would be a glorious buſtle I confeſs, and truly romantic." "From which, may heaven defend us," cried the Curate. "Well, I don't join in your wiſh," ſaid ſhe, "for I love a buſtle." "And are you really ſerious?" ſaid the Curate. "O, yes," replied the lady, "really ſerious. Ye gods! 'twould be a noble ſubject for an heroic poem!"

When, or where this converſation would have ended, we are not able to ſay, had not the return of the 'Squire from the pantry, put a ſtop to the lady's heroics: which, alſo gives us an opportunity of putting an end to this chapter.

CHAP.

CHAP. VIII.

Which introduces the beautiful Miſs Southern. With ſome Remarks on the Paſſion of Jealouſy.

AS ſoon as the 'Squire entered the room, he inquired of his ſiſter, how ſhe liked the Curate? "Exceedingly," replied ſhe, "he's worth a hundred ſuch wretches as Colraine," (meaning his ſon's tutor, for that was his name.) "May be ſo," ſaid the Squire, "but the proof of the pudding---I ſay no more, not but I like him well enough, only he'll neither ſmoak nor drink. But we ſhall break him in, by and by." "Indeed, but you ſhan't, if I can help it," ſaid the lady; "ſo keep your booriſh cuſtoms to yourſelf; he has a taſte for amuſements of a much ſuperior nature." "What, I ſuppoſe," ſaid the 'Squire,

"you mean that he loves a wench? Aye, aye, let the black coats alone for that, they're good hands at that ſport." "Hold your impious tongue," replied his ſiſter, "have you no regard to decency and good manners? will you never leave this vulgar way of talking?" "Lord," ſaid the 'Squire, "I mean no harm; Mr. Myrtle will not be affronted with any thing I ſay, and you know, ſiſter, I hate to baulk my joke." "Let me have no ſuch jokes here, brother, I deſire," ſaid the lady. "Well, well," replied the 'Squire, "I have done, I have done, ſo let's hear no more on't." "Then don't let me hear any more of your licentious ribaldry," ſaid the lady, "for it is as horrible to my ears, as the ſcreeching of owls, the braying of aſſes, or the diſſonant ſounds of a Scotch bag-pipe." "Mercy on me," ſaid the 'Squire, "how

paſſionate

paſſionate you are; 'tis a plaguy thing, ſiſter, you will be ſo deviliſh paſſionate." "Fie, fie, brother," replied the lady, "don't be ſo provoking; you know I hate to hear you degrade yourſelf by ſuch indelicate ſpeeches; you never uſed to be ſo vulgar, till you kept that wretch Colraine company, who is a ſcandal to his profeſſion. A pretty tutor for your ſon, truly; he'll educate him in a ſhort time, to diſgrace the honour of the Southerns, which has been preſerved inviolate ever ſince the days of William the Conqueror. But, no more of this at preſent, we are paying the gentleman (meaning the Curate) but a ſorry compliment, to entertain him with things of this nature." "By Juno," cried the Squire, "I'm glad the lecture's over, for 'tis ten times worſe than a long ſermon in a hard froſt."

Peace being ſettled, the governeſs deſired her brother to go to his daughter's apartment, and bring her to pay her reſpects to Mr. Myrtle, which he accordingly did; and, when ſhe entered the room, the governeſs ſaid, "this young lady, Sir, is my niece, who will be proud of your acquaintance, and think herſelf highly honoured, by having it in her power to render this place agreeable to you." "Madam," replied the Curate, "your civility demands my moſt grateful acknowledgments, and, I really want words to expreſs the high ſenſe I entertain of your favour." Then turning to the young lady, and approaching with the greateſt politeneſs, he ventured to ſalute her.

The reader, will probably, think the Curate a little too bold, in the inſtance juſt

juſt mentioned; but, were he as well acquainted with this angelic creature as we are, he would not only acknowledge the impoſſibility of reſiſting ſo inviting an opportunity, but envy his happineſs: for nature, perhaps, never preſented a more high finiſhed portrait of her own excellence, than in the perſon of Miſs Southern.—To ſay the truth, for we are unwilling to conceal any thing from the reader, this ſudden and unexpected ſalutation greatly heightened the delicacy of her countenance, already adorned with the graces of meekneſs, innocence and beauty, by giving birth to a glowing bluſh, which diſplayed the divinity of her charms in its utmoſt perfection; but, this will not appear ſtrange, when we inform the reader, that this ſalute, was the firſt ſhe ever received from any man, except her

father. No wonder, then, that ſhe bluſhed; and even the Curate was greatly confuſed, and looked a little fooliſh juſt at the time.

The governeſs now deſired Myrtle, to read the ballad to her niece, ſaying, "that though ſhe diſapproved the conduct of the poet, in reſpect to the cataſtrophe, the ſimplicity with which the ſtory was related, would give her pleaſure." This requeſt was immediately complied with; but through the whole, the Curate appeared to be greatly flurried, and did not deliver himſelf with that clearneſs of expreſſion, as when he read it before. As ſoon as he finiſhed the laſt ſtanza, the 'Squire ſaid, "What, do you call that a ballad? Why 'tis as melancholy as the *Three children in the wood*; or, *The lamentation of a ſinner.*

A fig

A fig for ſuch ballads; *Robin Hood, of merry Sherwood*, and, *Bumper 'Squire Jones*, are worth a thouſand of it." "I don't pretend to be a critic," ſaid Miſs Southern, "but, in my opinion, the lovers were highly blamable, to diſtruſt one another's fidelity on the credit of idle reports, or the ſuggeſtions of envy and malevolence; and, to proceed to an act of ſeparation without proof, diſcovered a weakneſs on both ſides, not much to the honour of their ſincerity. And, I ſhould imagine, that if their love had been pure, and reciprocal, it never would have given birth to jealouſy; for jealouſy is ſo deſpicable in its nature, as to be void of the leaſt affinity to the refined and exalted paſſion of love." "They are paſſions, in their nature, very diſtinct," replied the Curate, "and therefore their ideas will not admit

of aſſociation; but, if we take a ſurvey of the world, with any degree of attention, we ſhall find, that love is the origin of jealouſy; and that thoſe who are moſt ardent in love, are moſt ſubject to the impulſe of this tormenting paſſion; which ariſes from the apprehenſion of not being equally beloved by the object of our affection: an apprehenſion, which ſeldom fails of deſtroying what it is moſt ſolicitous to preſerve; for jealouſy naturally alienates the affection of that perſon who is the object of ſuſpicion." "I acknowledge myſelf unequal to the taſk of ſupporting a debate on ſo intricate a ſubject," replied Miſs Southern, "but this I know, that I ſhould ſoon entertain very unfavourable ſentiments of that lover, who ſhould ſuſpect my fidelity to him without abſolute proof. In ſhort, there is a meanneſs ſo diſhonour-

diſhonourable in unmerited jealouſy, as cannot fail to create, not only diſguſt, but hatred." "It is a dangerous paſſion, undoubtedly," ſaid the Curate, "and generally very fatal to thoſe who labour under its influence; for as it is impoſſible that our inward paſſions and inclinations can be viſible, it ſeldom happens, that jealouſy admits of alleviation." "And, do you really think, Sir", ſaid Miſs Southern, "that jealouſy always derives its origin from love?" "generally, but not always," replied the Curate, "it may ariſe from the conſciouſneſs of ſome imperfection, which may be conſidered as an impediment, to the attainment of the affection of the party beloved; for, if once we begin to diſtruſt our own merits, we naturally ſuſpect the ſincerity of others, in their profeſſions, either of friendſhip, or of love.---There

is one ſource of jealouſy," continued he, "which, as it will admit of no excuſe, is therefore intitled to no pity; and that is, when it ariſes ſolely from a diſpoſition naturally diſtruſtful and malignant. But, as this is a ſpecies of jealouſy not to be cured, we will judge ſo favourably, as to ſuppoſe there are very few inſtances of it."----Well, for my part," ſaid the 'Squire, "your diſcourſe is too high learned for me; but I always thought, that love was the ſole cauſe of jealouſy, for how the devil can folks be jealous of one another, unleſs they love one another? But come, Sir, it is time to be going, or we ſhall make my wife wait dinner for us." "Indeed brother," ſaid the governeſs, "he ſhan't ſtir from hence, I aſſure you, ſo you may go by yourſelf, if you think Mrs. Southern expects you to dinner." "Odd's heart," cried

cried the 'Squire, "that's unkind, ſiſter, to take the Curate from us already, why, we're hardly acquainted with him yet; beſides, I deſign to give him a hunt to-morrow, for the dogs are in fine order, and the hares very plenty, ſo that we ſhall have brave ſport: and I intend to mount him on *Smiler*, who is as good a gelding, as a man would deſire to croſs, only he is a little hard mouthed; but then, he'll always be foremoſt, and I verily believe, in my conſcience, if the devil was cloſe to his heels, he'd not let him paſs him." "Prithee let's have no more of your dogs and your horſes," ſaid the governeſs, "Mr. Myrtle, I hope, will ſtay with us; and I ſhall think it the higheſt honour, if he'll make the caſtle the place of his reſidence." "Madam," ſaid the Curate, "your generoſity is ſo unmerited, that

I am fearful of offending by a refuſal, at the ſame time, that I am indebted to Mr. Southern for a ſimilar offer." "O, never mind him," replied the governeſs, "leave me to ſettle that point, he will not diſpute the matter with me." "And if I did," ſaid the Squire, "I know who'd have the worſt on't----but 'tis very hard you ſhould have your way in every thing." "It would be very hard if I had not," replied the governeſs, "am not I your ſuperior in every reſpect? Do not I ſupport the dignity of our illuſtrious progenitors? And is it not my fortune, that is to exalt the conſequence of our family, and render the name of the Southerns important to the lateſt poſterity?----" Well, well," ſaid the 'Squire, "do as you will, do as you will; I know you muſt not be contradicted. But I hope Mr. Myrtle will

pay

pay us a friendly viſit, now and then, I'm ſure, Sir, we'll do our beſt to make you welcome." "Sir," ſaid Myrtle, "I ſhall think it my duty to ſee you often; and tho' I do not at preſent accept of the friendly invitation you gave me on my arrival laſt night, I am well aſſured your good ſenſe will excuſe the freedom I take with you, in giving the preference to the ladies." "Well," ſaid the 'Squire, "if it muſt be ſo, it muſt be ſo, I think, ſiſter always does as ſhe pleaſes; but I ſhall expect to ſee you ſoon." So ſaying, he took his leave, and returned home, not very well pleaſed with being obliged to leave the Curate behind him.

CHAP. IX.

An Apology for the Curate; with a Diſcovery that will pleaſe ſome Readers, and diſpleaſe others.

IT probably will be thought very ſingular, that the Curate did not return with Mr. Southern, after having received a friendly invitation from that gentleman, to make his houſe his home, at all times, or at leaſt, till he could ſettle himſelf at the parſonage. And it may be urg d by ſome, that, his giving the preference to the caſtle, diſcovered a want of good manners, if not of gratitude. But, we can aſſure the reader, with the ſtricteſt veracity, that his choice was directed by a cauſe too powerful to be

be reſiſted; and which, when fully explained, will, we perſuade ourſelves, acquit him very honourably, of every cenſurable imputation.—To avoid prolixity, we ſhall come to the point at once, by declaring, that the beautiful Miſs Southern, had made an inſtantaneous impreſſion on his heart, and filled his mind with thoſe pleaſing ſenſations which a firſt love inſpires. Hence, his reſolution became inſenſibly influenced, and his choice ſettled without the intervention of the will. So commanding is the power of beauty; ſo abſolute the authority of love!

During the remainder of that day, he found himſelf remarkably abſent, and bewildered with he knew not what; and though he frequently endeavoured to rouze his attention to thoſe civilities paid

paid him by the governeſs and her niece, he ſoon relapſed into a ſtate of inſenſibility; or, however, was loſt to every thing but the indulgence of thoſe pleaſing ideas, impreſſed on the mind by the firſt perceptions of love.

At night, when he retired to reſt, the image of Miſs Southern preſented itſelf to his mind, more lovely, if poſſible, than when ſhe was really preſent; and he began to perceive, with ſome concern, that it would be no eaſy taſk to baniſh from his heart, thoſe impreſſions love had already made, and which, he now found, were repeating their attack with redoubled force. We ſay, it was with concern he made this diſcovery, becauſe, he had hitherto enjoyed the bleſſings of a tranquil mind; and without any extravagance of hope, had entertained

tertained himſelf with the view of uninterrupted happineſs through the whole ſcene of life: but he now foreſaw, that this circumſtance would deprive him of his expectation, as in every view, it appeared to be ſurrounded with unſurmountable difficulties; and in ſhort, ſeemed pregnant with very fatal conſequences to his intereſt, and his happineſs. For, in the firſt place, it was highly probable, that a declaration of his paſſion would meet with a very unfavourable reception from Miſs Southern's friends, at leaſt, on account of his ſituation and circumſtance, and of courſe, be conſidered as an ungrateful return of the civilities he had received; which would be confirming them his enemies. A diſagreeable conſideration, as they were the principal inhabitants of the pariſh, where he was likely to

ſpend

ſpend the remainder of his days; and, as he hoped, with univerſal reſpect and eſteem.

In the ſecond place, there were little hopes of ſucceſs, could theſe objections be removed, it being highly improbable, that the young lady's heart was diſengaged; as her beauty, abſtracted from every other conſideration, had certainly ſecured her numberleſs admirers, ſome of whom, muſt have merited her love. And ſhould not this be the caſe, it did not follow, that his paſſion would be approved. From theſe conſiderations, he thought it would be moſt prudent to yield to the rigour of his fate, and by flying from her bewitching preſence, bury his preſumptuous paſſion in eternal ſilence.

This

This reſolution was but momentary, as it carried an objection with it, which ſoon deſtroyed its effect. This was the danger of making a ſudden retreat from the family, without aſſigning a proper reaſon for it. Here, love ſtept forward again, and maintained his plea with ſuch invincible influence, as obliged him at laſt, to wave all objections, and reſolve to attempt every difficulty, while he could ſupport himſelf with honour.

Notwithſtanding this reſolution, he determined to proceed by ſlow degrees, and obſerve the ſtricteſt circumſpection, leſt in his endeavours to gratify his own wiſhes, he ſhould deſtroy the happineſs of ſome innocent perſon. So deſirous was he, in every inſtance, of promoting that happineſs amongſt others, which he hoped to enjoy himſelf.

In the morning, when he aroſe, he endeavoured to preſerve his uſual ſerenity of countenance, and cheerfulneſs of diſpoſition, though his mind was far from being at eaſe; and he found, on the approach of the lovely cauſe of his diſquietude, when ſhe made her appearance at breakfaſt, that it would be impoſſible for him to reſide at the caſtle, without ruſhing on what he wiſhed to avoid, for a time at leaſt, till obſervation and inquiry ſhould enable him to judge of the certainty or uncertainty of ſucceſs; being already ſenſible, that to be conſtantly with this adorable object, would ſoon rob him of his peace of mind, and by increaſing his ſolicitude, render him incapable of attending to the duties of his ſtation, with that diligence which virtue and religion required of him.

As ſoon as breakfaſt was over, he deſired leave to viſit the parſonage and the church, in order to ſettle the neceſſary preliminaries for his holding the cure. A requeſt that was readily granted; but he was ſtrictly enjoined to return as ſoon as he conveniently could, which he promiſed to do.

Before we proceed any further, it will be neceſſary for us to give the reader a ſhort account of this gentleman's hiſtory, and likewiſe, a general ſketch of his character.

Mr. Myrtle's parents dying while he was very young, he was committed to the care of a friend; who being deſirous of giving him a liberal education, placed him at Weſtminſter School, where he was very diligent and attentive in acquiring

quiring a competent knowledge of the Latin and Greek languages; and when of a proper age, he was ſent to the univerſity of Oxford. Being informed, when he was entered there, that his education was to be his fortune, and conſequently, all he was to depend on for his future ſupport when he quitted college, he had the prudence and the virtue to apply himſelf to his ſtudies, with indefatigable induſtry; which, joined to an eager and reſtleſs purſuit after knowledge, ſoon facilitated his making a very rapid progreſs in ſeveral of thoſe ſciences, that adorn and embelliſh human nature, and, by contributing to its convenience and pleaſure, become the grand agents of human felicity.

His aſſiduity, and the ſurprizing genius he was found to poſſeſs, ſoon rendered

dered him the admiration of the whole univerſity; nor, was he more beloved for his abilities, than revered for that virtue, which ſhone ſo conſpicuouſly in the conduct of all his actions.

He had reſided at college but two years, when his friend and guardian died, and as no proviſion had been made by this perſon for his ſupport, during the remainder of the time he was to reſide there, he found himſelf left deſtitute, and intirely dependent on the mercy of the world. But as hope ſeldom forſakes the virtuous, ſo did it not abandon him. Nor was he aſhamed of that misfortune, which, coming unmerited, could not reflect any diſhonour. He made his caſe known to the heads of the college, with a becoming fortitude, and ſolicited their advice in ſo critical

tical a ſituation. Virtue is ſeldom deſerted, and if for a time, ſhe is very rarely ſuffered to be completely miſerable. His diſtreſs was no ſooner known, but he met with friendſhip and aſſiſtance, almoſt unlimited. His wants were immediately ſupplied, beyond his wiſhes, and he ſometimes ſuffered uneaſineſs from the ſolicitations of liberality. He found himſelf now, more than ever, careſſed and eſteemed by his friends; who ſtudied by this means, to diſſipate the anxieties of dependence. With what dignity do great minds confer an obligation!

In a ſhort time, he ſucceeded to a fellowſhip, and when of a proper ſtanding, was admitted to take orders; and he was now completely happy, by having the means of ſupporting himſelf in his own

own poſſeſſion, without being troubleſome to others: one of the greateſt bleſſings a generous mind can poſſibly enjoy. And juſt as he attained the age of twenty-five, and had taken prieſt's orders, a vacancy happened at one of the churches at Coventry, by the death of the curate; to which he was preſented by the rector, who was one of the heads of the college, where he had received his education, as has been mentioned before.

As a man, his character was in every reſpect amiable, and replete with all the virtues. Honour, gratitude, benevolence, and integrity, were apparently the predominant features of his mind. He was temporate in his life, ſtrictly pious, a ſocial companion, and a generous friend: nor was he more remark-

able for his meekneſs, than for his humanity.—His converſation was open and communicative, without the leaſt reſerve, and what he ſaid was always ſenſible and ingenious; but this will not be a matter of ſurpriſe, when we inform the reader, that his reading was uncommonly extenſive, conſidering his age, and his memory wonderfully tenacious; by which means, his knowledge was almoſt univerſal, ſo that ſcarce any ſubject could occur, in which he did not acquit himſelf with the higheſt reputation; but his great modeſty led him to be ſlow, and diffident in his advances to others, though eaſy of acceſs himſelf.

His perſon was extremely fair and handſome, and though his height was rather

rather above the middle ſize, it did not exceed the proportions of beauty.

His countenance was generally animated with a ſmile, which was moſt conſpicuous whenever he was engaged in converſation; in which, his addreſs was engagingly affable, yet mingled with a native, unaſſumed dignity, that rendered him equally the object of admiration and reſpect, with all thoſe who had the pleaſure of his acquaintance. His diſcourſe upon all occaſions, breathed the genuine ſpirit of virtue, and the conduct of all his actions, bore the ſtrongeſt teſtimonial of his being maſter of that moſt noble of all human perfections, a truly good heart. No labour ever detered him from the proſecution of any deſign which appeared to be laudable and praiſe-worthy; nor, was it

ever in the power of diſappointments, to ſhake his fortitude of mind, or weaken his attachment to virtue.

In his public character as a clergyman, his conduct was exemplary. He entertained the moſt awful, and exalted notions of the wiſdom, and goodneſs of God. His judgment was clear, his penetration deep, his underſtanding acute, his knowledge of the human heart profound; and ſuch the ſtrength and dignity of his mind, as to enable him, not only to judge of the conduct of others, but even of his own actions, with impartiality. In ſhort, his innocence was religiouſly pure, his virtue conſtant and uniform, his deteſtation of vice fixed and reſolute, and his diſdain of licentious pleaſures glorioufly heroic.

In the pulpit, the magic of his eloquence was ſo forcible, and ſo ſweet, as to captivate by a ſecret and irreſiſtible influence, which ſeldom failed, not only of engaging, but of commanding attention; holding, as it were, in ſuſpenſe, all the faculties of his auditors: And as nature had endowed him with the talent of pleaſing, he as ſeldom failed of touching the heart, by a happy application to the underſtanding. He ſtudied with indefatigable induſtry, to diſplay the beauties of virtue and holineſs, and uſed his utmoſt endeavours, to render the important myſteries of religion, plain and familiar to the weakeſt capacities; always expreſſing great tenderneſs to thoſe who differed from him in religious opinions.

In his ordinary diſcourſe, as well as in his public lectures, he ſtrenuouſly cultivated the moſt important principles of human wiſdom, and prudence. He taught the rich, to enjoy affluence with circumſpection, leſt it ſhould prove the nurſe of voluptuouſneſs, which never fails of debilitating both the body and the mind. He cautioned the ambitious, never to purchaſe glory at the expence of virtue: There being nothing more to be dreaded, than thoſe paſſions and pleaſures, by which virtue is capable of ſubverſion.

To the poor, he gave the leſſons of contentment, and by perſuading them to be reſigned to the diſpenſations of Providence, he rendered them happy, without the gifts of fortune: Since the moſt

moſt valuable of all riches, conſiſts in the bleſſings of health, the offspring of labour and temperance; in the pleaſures of content, the reward of a virtuous life; and a conſtant reverence of the wiſdom, goodneſs, and mercy of the Almighty.

To the unfortunate, and the wretched, he adminiſtered conſolation, by teaching them, that miſery depends more upon imaginary evils, than real ones; becauſe the former encourage impatience, while the latter frequently teach us reſolution and fortitude.

By his own amiable conduct, and ſtrict obſervance of the moral and ſocial duties of life, he became an illuſtrious example for imitation; by which

means, he ſoon brought his pariſhioners to be in love with themſelves, their neighbours, and their dependants; and to diffuſe around them, univerſal harmony and friendſhip.

CHAP.

CHAP. X.

Containing a Circumſtance, which frequently happens in moſt Chriſtian Families.

THE Curate returned to the caſtle, in the evening, after having viſited the church, and the parſonage, and paid his reſpects to ſome of the principal inhabitants of the pariſh. Juſt as he entered, an expreſs arrived from the 'Squire's; but the meſſenger, being almoſt breathleſs, was unable, for a time, to deliver the buſineſs of his embaſſy. However, after a delay of many minutes, he acquainted the governeſs, that his maſter deſired her immediate attendance; ſomething having

happened of a very extraordinary nature, the particulars of which he was a ſtranger to. "Mercy on me!" cried the governeſs, "What can have happened? Is the houſe on fire, or has any of the family died ſuddenly?" "No, no," replied the ſervant; "the houſe is not on fire yet, but it may be ſoon, for ought I know; for there's a fine *rumpus* amongſt them; and though nobody's dead at preſent, it may not be long before murder's committed; for the 'Squire's in a deadly paſſion, and ſtamps, and raves, and ſwears, an as thof he had not an hour to live. Mercy on us all! I wou'd it was well over, ſo, do madam, pray make all the haſte you can, may-hap, you may be able to ſet matters to rights again."

This

This ſtrange account occaſioned various conjectures, reſpecting the cauſe of it, and greatly excited the curioſity of the governeſs, who ordered her coach to be got ready, with all poſſible expedition, and waited with the utmoſt impatience, till ſhe ſhould be able to be a ſpectator of the confuſion juſt related: While poor Miſs Southern, was alarmed and terrified with a thouſand dreadful apprehenſions; and burſting into a flood of tears, begged ſhe might accompany her aunt. This requeſt was readily complied with, and the governeſs deſired the Curate would go with them. The coach now drew up, and they ſet off without further delay.

When they arrived at the 'Squire's, the violence of the tumult was over, and every thing ſeemed at peace. Not,

that the actors had quitted the theatre of contention, but were pauſing in ſilence for the approach of the governeſs, whoſe preſence they found neceſſary, in order to ſettle the cataſtrophe, and conclude the drama. The governeſs was inſtantly conducted to the great parlour, which was the ſcene of action, attended by Miſs Southern and the Curate. On their entrance, the ſituation of the characters, was as follows.

Before the fire, ſtood Mr. Southern muſing, with a wrinkled brow, which ſeemed to threaten violence and uproar, or a breach of the peace at leaſt. By his ſide, ſat parſon Colraine, the tutor, ſmoaking his pipe with great compoſure. Maſter Philip, had placed himſelf in one corner of the room, with his back

back cloſe againſt the wainſcot, blubbering, and wringing his hands, like a truant ſchool-boy, brought before a mercileſs pedagogue for correction; or a criminal at the bar, begging for mercy of the judge, before ſentence of death is paſt upon him. In another corner of the room, ſat Mrs. Southern, in an elbow chair, diſſolved in tears: The perfect emblem of ſilent ſorrow.

As ſoon as the governeſs entered the parlour, the 'Squire cried out, "O, ſiſter, ſiſter! we're ruined, we're ruined; we're undone, we're undone: Why was I born, why was I born?" "Heav'n protect us!" replied the lady, "What is the matter? ſpeak quickly, or I ſhall die with apprehenſion." "O," ſaid the 'Squire, "I am aſhamed to tell you, all is over; the honour of our family's gone

gone for ever; I never more ſhall be able to ſhow my face at Coventry, or take the chair amongſt my brother juſtices, at the quarter ſeſſions."

"A plague on the juſtices, and the quarter ſeſſions too," replied the governeſs, in a paſſion, "ſpeak to be underſtood, What is the matter?" "Matter, enough," returned the 'Squire, "and much more than there ſhould be; Phil, has got a baſtard clapped upon him. Lucy, the chambermaid, is brought to bed of a boy, this afternoon, and has declared him the father of it; there's a commence for you!"

Here, maſter Philip began to exalt his notes conſiderably louder than he had done before, and roared out, not much unlike the bellowing of a mad bull;

bull; or, to ſpeak in the language of muſicians, he was quite fortiſſimo; though his warblings were not very melodious.

As ſoon as the 'Squire explained the cauſe of their confuſion, the governeſs burſt into a violent paſſion, and ſaid, "O horrible! horrible! moſt horrible! Adieu to the glory of the Southerns! No longer ſhall the ſpotleſs honour of our illuſtrious anceſtors, be diſplayed in the liſts of fame! Never, till this fatal hour, did our virtue ſuffer contamination; but deſcended from generation to generation, pure and immaculate. Perdition ſeize the author of our ſhame."

"Prithee, ſiſter," ſaid the 'Squire, "don't put yourſelf in ſuch a curſed paſſion;

paſſion; What ſignifies your talking of virtue, and honour, and glory now? I ſent for you, to adviſe us how to make the beſt of a bad matter. 'Tis too late to preach about virtue, and ſuch ſtuff; beſides, for the matter of that, if ev'ry ſaddle was clapped on the right horſe, ſome folks had better hold their tongues about virtue. The boy has done a fooliſh thing, to be ſure, but he's not the firſt of the family who has been a caterwauling." This laſt ſentence, was accompanied with a ſhrug of the ſhoulders, and ſuch a ſneer of contempt, as did not fail to fix it, where it was intended. The reader cannot be at a loſs to know what this alluded to.

"Brother, brother," cried the governeſs, almoſt choaked with rage, "Do you

you mean to affront me? Is it thus you ſhow your love? Is it thus you requite all my kindneſs to you? Am I become your ſcorn, and muſt I be the butt of your innuendoes?" "Nay," ſaid the 'Squire, "you deſerve it; Why do you run on ſo, then? If the cap fits you wear it; I know what I ſaid, nor will I deny it; but I mentioned no names, remember, ſo if you will take it to yourſelf you may for what I care. Surely one of the quorum may ſay what he pleaſes, in his own houſe; aye, and out of it too, or who'd be a juſtice of the peace? 'Sblood, if you were to ſhow your airs before the bench, as you do here, we ſhould commit you."

"Commit me!" replied ſhe, "O thou boor; thou wretch; thou unnatural monſter! But you ſhall ſuffer for this beha-

behaviour, depend on it. I'll make you rue this inſolence, as long as you live; for though you are my brother, I here renounce you, and all your diabolical connections; nor will I leave you a ſhilling at my death, ſhould you ſurvive me. So let me have my carriage, that I may take my leave of you, for ever."

"Dear ſiſter," ſaid Mrs. Southern, riſing from her chair, having been ſilent during this ſquabble, "do not mind your brother; you know he is obſtinate, and given to paſſion." "I given to paſſion," cried the 'Squire, having abated his warmth, in conſequence of the declaration juſt recited; "I am not given to paſſion; no one can ſay that of me, I'm ſure. I wiſh my ſiſter was as temperate as I am. What did I ſay to provoke

provoke her? Nothing that I know of. And if I did, the houſe is tiled, and here is none but friends."

"No, no," ſaid parſon Colraine, taking the pipe from his mouth, "his worſhip's a very peaceable gentleman, and far from being paſſionate; nor did I hear him ſay any thing, that could poſſibly give offence."

"What! thou miſcreant," ſaid the Governeſs, "Do you pretend to interfere? O thou imp of darkneſs, thou prime miniſter of Lucifer! 'tis to you we owe this misfortune. You have tutored the boy to a fine purpoſe! 'Twas a curſe on our family, when firſt you ſet foot in't." "Why, what hand have I had in this affair?" replied he, "Was it in my power to help an accident of this

this nature? Surely, madam, you have loſt your ſenſes." "May be ſo," ſaid the Governeſs, "but I have not loſt my hands, and that you ſhall find." Whereupon ſhe flew to him with great violence, and began to pommel the poor parſon without mercy; who roſe from his chair, and endeavoured to avoid her fury; while the 'Squire, and Mrs. Southern, ſtrove to pacify her, till their attention was called off, to an object more worthy of their care.

This was no other than Miſs Southern, whoſe ſpirits being greatly agitated with what had happened, was unable any longer to ſupport herſelf amidſt the confuſion, and had fainted away in the Curate's arms, who luckily, ſtood ſo near as to ſave her from falling to the ground.

It

It is impoſſible to deſcribe thoſe emotions of the ſoul, the Curate felt on this occaſion, and which, were viſible in his countenance. And though he was greatly ſhocked at her ſwooning, he felt a tumultuous joy, on having the lovely object of his wiſhes within his arms. Finding ſhe continued inſenſible, he gently raiſed her head, and reſted it on his boſom, while, with one hand round her waiſt, he ſupported her with all imaginable care and tenderneſs.

In a ſhort time, however, the blood began to reviſit her angelic face, and recovering by degrees, ſhe opened her enchanting eyes, which ſhe fixed on the Curate with a ſteady attention, and remained ſometime ſilent; till obſerving her ſituation, ſhe ſaid, with inexpreſſible ſoftneſs, and a look full of tenderneſs,

neſs and gratitude, "dear Sir, I am greatly obliged to you—I have been very troubleſome—pray lead me to a chair—I hope you will pardon me!" "Dear Miſs," replied he, bowing with great condeſcenſion, "I beg you will not mention it; tho' I was greatly affected by the accident, I am amply rewarded for my uneaſineſs, by the recollection, that I providently was ſo near as to be of ſervice to you."

"Well, I vow," ſaid the governeſs, "Mr. Myrtle is very polite, and, I am ſure, my dear Laura (for that was the young lady's name) and I too, ſhall think ourſelves eternally obliged to him." "By my faith," cried the 'Squire, "and ſo ſhall I; 'twas very kind and civil, to ſave my poor girl from falling, for I declare, while we were ſquabling,

I never

I never obſerved any thing the matter with her. But a plague on all quarrels, ſay I, there's never any good comes of them; ſo let us be friends; what ſay you ſiſter, will you forgive me? Come, I know you won't bear malice! Do, Mr. Myrtle, make peace amongſt us, you're a good ſoul, I'm ſure, for all you're a black coat. Faith, I'm ſorry I affronted ſiſter, for, by Juno, I did not intend it."

"Sir," replied Myrtle, "If I have any influence with the lady, you may command it; and be aſſured, nothing will give me greater pleaſure, than to ſee you reconciled, that peace and harmony may ſubſiſt amongſt you; and, at this time, I the more particularly wiſh it on Miſs Southern's account, as her ſpirits ſtill ſeem greatly agitated." Then taking

taking hold of the young lady's hand, which he could not reſiſt preſſing with ſome emotion, with the utmoſt tenderneſs and concern, he inquired if ſhe found herſelf recovered. To which, ſhe anſwered, in the affirmative, with a down-caſt eye, and broken accent, bluſhing as ſhe ſpoke; which being perceived by the Curate, he inſtantly felt the ſame ſuffuſion, but endeavoured to ſuppreſs it; and turning to the governeſs, ſolicited her to forget what had happened, and thereby, reſtore peace and happineſs to a diſtracted family.

"Well, Sir," ſaid the governeſs, "tho' I think I have been very injuriouſly treated, I ſhall, at your requeſt, be content to drop all altercation on ſo diſagreeable a ſubject; having the higheſt opinion of your underſtanding, and therefore,

therefore, I am willing to reſign myſelf to your direction." "Madam," ſaid Myrtle, "your politeneſs leads you to pay me a compliment I am unworthy of, and, I confeſs myſelf incapable of acknowledging it as I ought."

"Come, come," cried the Squire, "a truce with compliments and ceremony, let us come to the point in hand. What's to be done in our preſent unfortunate ſituation? Siſter, what do you adviſe us to do? You know I never love to take any ſtep without you." "If I am to adviſe," ſaid the Governeſs, aſſuming an air of importance, "and I think I have the greateſt right to take that office upon me; I am for puniſhing the authors of this horrid ſcene of iniquity, with the utmoſt ſeverity; for ſurely, nothing can be adequate to the

crime of deſtroying the ſpotleſs fame of our family, renowned for deeds of untainted honour, and glory, for numberleſs ages. And firſt, though the ties of conſanguinity do naturally prejudice me in favour of your ſon Philip, ſtill, his crime is of ſo deep a dye, that I hold it fit, he be puniſhed with the ſtricteſt ſeverity. Secondly, I recommend, that you make a very minute examination into the affair, in order to inform yourſelf, by what means, and in what manner, this infernal proceeding was brought about." "O," ſaid the 'Squire, "that's eaſily conjectured; it was accompliſhed the old way, no doubt, for I never knew of any other." "Speak not in riddles," replied the Governeſs, "I underſtand you not; but, as I imagine your intention is couched in ambiguous terms, with a view to diſguiſe

ſome

ſome ludicrous meaning, it is beſt, that you keep it to yourſelf." "Lord, ſiſter," ſaid the Squire, "I only meant to joke, and there's no harm in a joke, you know." "Indeed but there is," replied the Governeſs, "for there are very few jokes will bear an examination, or, to ſpeak more properly, that will ſtand the teſt of criticiſm. But to proceed—as to the infamous ſtrumpet, who has been the grand inſtrument in this diabolical tranſaction, I will her to the houſe of correction; and the offſpring of her iniquity to the care of the pariſh. And further, I hold it moſt eligible, that both be removed from hence this very night."

"Surely, ſiſter," ſaid Mrs. Southern, "that will be rather too precipitate; conſider the condition of the mother,

and her new-born infant." "I ſhall conſider nothing about it," replied the Governeſs, "I will have it ſo, and that's enough. Let me ſee who'll diſpute the point with me?" "By Juno," cried the 'Squire, "I won't, for I ſhall come off with the worſt on't, if I do." "I am very ſorry, madam," ſaid Mrs. Southern, "I cannot comply with your commands; but, if the child really is my ſon's, as I am afraid is too true, I cannot help conſidering it my duty, to take care of it; and as for its mother, however unworthy of any favour, or indulgence, humanity will not ſuffer me to remove her at preſent: I cannot anſwer it to my conſcience, and therefore, for the ſake of my own peace of mind, I hope my wiſhes will be complied with." "Prithee, my dear," replied the 'Squire, "What has conſcience to

do

do in a caſe of this nature? Conſcience never got a woman with child yet; ſo don't be fooliſh, but let ſiſter have her way." "And ſo I will," ſaid the Governeſs, "or I'll make the houſe too hot to hold you all."

"Well," replied Mrs. Southern, "if any thing happens wrong, take the miſchief to yourſelves, and remember, I have no hand in it." "Fie, fie, ſiſter," ſaid the Governeſs, "would you ſuffer the infamous huſſy to remain here? What! Shall pollution receive ſhelter within theſe walls, the ancient manſion of our great forefathers? Shall the engine of Satan, and our family's diſgrace dwell amongſt us; and ſhall the type of our ſhame ſtare us in the face? O, monſtrous! Are you loſt to reaſon and common ſenſe? It is but ſtrict juſtice,

that the mother be puniſhed without mercy, as an example to others. In ſhort, you may contend as much as you will, but I am determined to ſee her, and her baſtard, out of the houſe before I go."

"Madam," ſaid Colraine, who had been ſilent ever ſince his late encounter, "I grant your argument to be good, and conſequently juſt; but ſtill it is neceſſary, ſometimes, to wink at improprieties, when convenience or intereſt is in the caſe; and therefore, with the higheſt reſpect to your great judgment, I think Mrs. Southern's fears, which are founded on the principles of humanity, are worthy your attention."

"Really, madam," ſaid Myrtle, "if I may be permitted to give my opinion, without

without incurring the charge of preſumption, I cannot help joining Mrs. Southern. I do not mean to exculpate the young woman; on the contrary, ſhe juſtly ſtands condemned for the ſeduction of the young gentleman; yet, notwithſtanding this, there are ſome reaſons which render her an object of pity. To remove either her, or the infant, immediately, may endanger the lives of them both, a circumſtance worthy regard; beſides which, as the evil admits of no remedy, I think a conduct of this nature is in ſome reſpects cruel, at the ſame time, that it will undoubtedly, be the means of making an affair public, which prudence directs you to conceal."

"Well," ſaid the Governeſs, "your arguments carry weight with them, and

in part, I ſubmit to be directed by you; but ſhe ſhall remain no longer here, than till ſhe may be removed with ſafety; and, I'm determined the huſſy ſhall ſtand in a white ſheet."

"Even that, madam," replied Myrtle, "is a ſtep I would not wiſh you to purſue, notwithſtanding, it may appear ſtrange for me to ſpeak againſt it; but, I never yet obſerved that inſtitution produce any good effects; on the contrary, it too often defeats its own intention. It is undoubtedly, founded on the higheſt wiſdom, and it would be happy if it always produced that reformation it means to promote; but, it is greatly to be feared, that morality ſuffers more by it, than religion is benefited; for I have generally remarked, that, where young women undergo this penance publicly,

publicly, it deſtroys the ſenſe of ſhame, and thereby, renders them regardleſs of virtue in their future conduct. Beſides which, there are ſome minds unable to ſupport it, however juſtly they may have merited the infliction: and, I know of two inſtances, by which the perſons ſo expoſed, were deprived of their ſenſes, and continued ſo during the remainder of their lives. It is, therefore, the wiſh of humanity, that ſome diſtinction might be made in caſes of this nature; for, as it is impoſſible, every inſtance can be equally criminal, an equality of puniſhment ought to be avoided; ſo that, prudence and mercy ſhould ſometimes influence the determinations of juſtice."

"By Juno," cried the 'Squire, in a rapture, "if the Curate's as good a man

in the pulpit, he ſhall preach under-leg with all the clergy in the county." "Prithee, brother," ſaid the Governeſs, "let us have none of your nonſenſe, for when once you begin, there is never an end to it. Mr. Myrtle is a gentleman of great underſtanding; I am perfectly ſatisfied with what he has ſaid, and ſhall be ruled by him; ſo let the huſſy and her baſtard ſtay, till they can be removed with ſafety." "Heaven be praiſed," ſaid Mrs. Southern, "I ſhould never have reſted in peace, had they been turned out of the houſe ſo ſoon." "Aye, ſiſter," replied the Governeſs, "you are a very good woman, I'll allow, but you are not capable of making proper diſtinctions in ſuch intricate points as theſe; ſo you had better mind your pickling and preſerving, your ſalves and your conſerves, for there, undoubtedly,

edly, you are in your natural element. But now," continued ſhe, "we have one thing more to ſettle, and that is, to adjudge a puniſhment adequate to my graceleſs nephew's crime; here, ſtand forth, thou raſcal, and anſwer for yourſelf." No anſwer being made to this ſummons, they looked round to the place where they ſuppoſed he was, and to their great ſurpriſe, found he had given them the ſlip, and withdrawn himſelf unperceived, during the time they were engaged in the converſation juſt recited. "Stole away, by Juno," cried the 'Squire, burſting into a loud fit of laughter; "Well, I don't blame him, for the dog has been pretty well trim'd; I horſe-whip'd him tightly for it; e'cod I laced him handſomely; I'll warrant his ſides are ſore."

"And how durſt you do that, without my knowledge?" cry'd the Governeſs, "What! horſe-whip my nephew, as you would one of your hounds? Brother, brother, I'm aſham'd of you; what an indignity! He's the firſt of the Southern's, that ever ſuffered ſuch a diſgrace."—"Surely," ſaid the 'Squire, "the devil owes me a baſting; for, right or wrong, I am always brought in guilty. 'Tis very hard a man mayn't chaſtiſe his own ſon, if he likes it; by Juno, the world's come to a fine paſs elſe. But I'm reſolved, I'll aſk the recorder of Coventry, whether the law will not uphold a man to beat his own ſon, if he likes it?" Well, and what then?" ſaid the Governeſs, "Do you think the recorder of Coventry is to preſcribe laws to me, where the dignity of my family's at ſtake? No; and

ſince

ſince you have preſumed to puniſh the boy in that ignominious manner, without my conſent; I here, before this company, ſtrictly forbid any furthur proceeding of this nature, notwithſtanding the horrid crime he has commited."

"Nay," replied the 'Squire, "for the matter of that, I was almoſt inclined to forgive the crime; but what provoked me to beat him, was his denying the fact, and obſtinately perſiſting in his innocence, tho' the maid offered to take her oath of it."—"As to the fact," ſaid Colraine, "it is indiſputable, for the 'Squire knows I examined, and croſs-examined the maid, with the greateſt ſtrictneſs, and ſhe never varied from the point, in the leaſt degree. But as to the crime, I ſee nothing in it; the young gentleman has done a manly act,

and,

and, proved himſelf a uſeful member to the community; nor is there any danger of your family's honour being ſullied by it, provided you keep it a ſecret, and don't expoſe yourſelves by your own imprudence. Mr. Myrtle, ſpoke very prettily on that head, and, upon my word, conſidering he's a young man, his notions are very commendable."

"And ſo," ſaid the Governeſs, "my nephew is to get baſtards, for the good of the community, is he? Fine doctrine, truly!"—"It is a doctrine, madam," replied Colraine, "founded on the policy of all well governed ſtates, and that general intereſt of mankind, which we ſhould endeavour to encourage and promote." "O monſtrous!" cryed the Governeſs, "I ſhall loſe all patience, if you run on ſo. But I won't

put

put myſelf in a paſſion, for ſuch opinions are beneath contempt. Mercy on me! I never can be perſuaded, that it is not a horrid crime, for a boy, not eighteen years of age, to be guilty of fornication." "Do not call it a crime," ſaid Colraine, "it is the impulſe of the paſſions; and, at his time of life, they are too powerful to be reſiſted; ſo that the fault is in nature, for we no more chooſe our paſſions, than our features, or complexion."

"If I rightly underſtand the force of your poſition, Sir," ſaid Myrtle, "you would inſinuate, that all human actions are directed by the impulſe of the paſſions; and, that it is lawful to ſubmit ourſelves implicitly, to their direction?" "Certainly," replied Colraine, "that is my meaning." "Why, then,

then, Sir," ſaid Myrtle, "according to that argument, every irregularity we commit, being influenced by the paſſions, muſt be right."—"Undoubtedly," replied the other, "according to the law of nature, tho' not of nations." "I cannot think," ſaid Myrtle, "that the laws of nature, direct us to the commiſſion of any act, that may be either injurious to ourſelves or others. The great Author of the univerſe, deſigned, that all created beings ſhould be happy, and therefore, every ſtep we take to the contrary, is an affront to the majeſty of Heaven. And, certainly, nothing can be more evident, than that, there is a difference in things, and, conſequently in actions. This, our daily obſervation, and the common occurences of life, will ſufficiently illuſtrate. Otherwiſe, right and wong, good and evil, virtue

and

and vice, are terms merely ideal, and of no importance. For if this difference does not really exiſt in nature, theſe ſeveral terms can have no meaning; from whence, it is evident, that this difference in things, and actions, and their being preferable one to another, muſt ariſe ſolely from nature, independent of any power in human beings to the contrary. The paſſions are, undoubtedly, the firſt principles of human actions, and hence, ſtir up and awaken the underſtanding, and, by this means, enforce the will; otherwiſe, we ſhould be little more than inanimate creatures, or, however, be remiſs and ſedentary, ſlow in our reſolves, and languiſhing in the execution of them; and, therefore, to extinguiſh the paſſions, would be the higheſt abſurdity: notwithſtanding which, they are very frequently, the firſt traitors

tors to the ſoul, by miſleading the ſenſes, to whom they ſhould be infallible and faithful guides. So that it is of the higheſt importance, to endeavour to regulate and direct them to valuable and virtuous purpoſes, which is beſt accompliſhed, by attempting to refine them to a greater degree of elegance, than we receive them from nature. But it requires the higheſt wiſdom and prudence to guard againſt their predominant influence, leſt we too eaſily ſink into an implicit ſubmiſſion, and habitual confidence, till depravity accelerates the deſcent to a life merely ſenſual. For, which reaſon, we ſhould ſtrive to hold them in ſubjection, at the ſame time, that it is neceſſary to preſerve their vigour. They would then, animate us to actions, truly laudable in themſelves, as well as beneficial in their effects to

ſociety;

ſociety; and, by inſpiring rational ambition, correct love, and elegant deſire, contribute to the eaſe and pleaſure of life. Providence has wiſely placed good and evil before us, leaving the choice to the direction of our wills. The motives to a life of virtue are infinite: not leſs than the favour or anger of omnipotence; not leſs than everlaſting happineſs or miſery. It is, therefore, a matter of wonder and concern, that rational beings ſhould prefer the pleaſures of ſenſuality, to the ſublime enjoyments of wiſdom and virtue; ſince a very little obſervation will convince us, that they are fleeting illuſions, varying every moment, and changing their ſhape and colour, like unſubſtantial vapours, till at length, they fade, and are loſt in total obſcurity."

"Zounds,"

"Zounds," cryed the 'Squire, "all this may be very fine, for ought I know, but, by Juno, 'tis above my comprehenſion; ſo let us talk of ſomething we all underſtand." "What, you're a beginning again," ſaid the Governeſs, "will you never be wiſe and hold your tongue; will you never leave playing the fool? Can you ever be tired of hearing ſuch divine ſentiments? For ſhame brother, for ſhame; remember what our immortal countryman ſaid, *Aſſume a virtue, if you have it not.* O, Shakeſpeare! divine creature! how I adore thy works!" "A fiddleſtick for Shakeſpeare, and all the cracked-brain tribe of beggerly poets; we are free ſouls, and have a right to enjoy ourſelves our own way, in ſpite of any thing they ever ſaid, or can ſay. I'm ſure they've almoſt turned your poor brain with their

their nonſenſe; nay, if I had ſaid quite, I ſhould not have been far from the mark, for the matter of that." "Brother, brother," replied the Governeſs, "Am I never to ſee you, but I muſt be inſulted thus? Say one ſuch word more, and I'll never darken your doors again." "Well, well," ſaid the 'Squire, "I have done, I won't affront you; but you know well enough, 'tis all the cry of the country, that you're a conjurer, and deal with the devil." "A conjurer!" replied the Governeſs, "O thou ideot, thou dunce of the firſt magnitude, you are no conjurer, I am ſure. But let ſomebody order my coach, for I'll not ſtay another minute in your houſe." Here ſhe roſe from her chair, and walked about the room greatly incenſed; while Mrs. Southern, and the Curate, endeavoured to pacify her, but without

without effect; till a ſervant entered, and ſaid the coach was ready, when ſhe departed, taking Miſs Southern and Myrtle with her; telling her brother, as ſhe left the room, that ſhe inſiſted on it, the ſtrumpet and her baſtard ſhould remain in the houſe but one week; and that maſter Philip ſhould, by way of puniſhment, be confined a cloſe priſoner a full month; but ſtrictly forbid the 'Squire to horſe whip him again, for if he did, and it came to her knowledge, ſhe would give him the doing of it.

CHAP.

CHAP. XI.

A Converſation betwixt the 'Squire and Parſon Colraine, not more entertaining than the Contents of the laſt Chapter.

AS ſoon as the Governeſs left Mr. Southern's, Colraine began to exclaim againſt the Curate, whoſe merit and whoſe virtue, he could not avoid admiring in his own mind, though he choſe, for particular reaſons, to deſpiſe him publicly. But, to thoſe of envious and depraved diſpoſitions, there is nothing ſo intolerable as merit joined with virtue. He poſſeſſed a great ſhare of cunning, and plainly foreſaw, that Myrtle's abilities, and goodneſs of heart, muſt ſoon gain him ſuch influence with the

the 'Squire's family, as would deſtroy his power; ſo that, he conſidered it as an act of neceſſity, or ſelf-defence, to endeavour to undermine him, before his importance became too formidable. He knew the extent of Mr. Southern's underſtanding, and he alſo knew the prevalence of his own policy over this weak man's credulity; but he dreaded the deſpotic authority of the Governeſs, over her brother; and therefore, he determined to act with that cautious ſubtilty, ever obſerved, by thoſe who are condemned to do the drudgery of wickedneſs, and to ſmart under the ſcourge of fearful apprehenſion, or, the agonizing tortures of a guilty conſcience.

That he might omit no opportunity of poiſoning the 'Squire's mind againſt Myrtle, he ſcarce waited for Mrs. Southern's

Southern's retiring, and the cloth's being removed after ſupper, before he addreſſed himſelf to Mr. Southern, in the following manner:

"Indeed, my worthy Sir, this ſame Myrtle, is a very ſilly, prating fellow. Did not your worſhip obſerve, how he engroſſed all the converſation to himſelf? He would hardly give us an opportunity of ſaying a word, though both of us are much better qualified than he, to ſpeak on any ſubject. This was the heighth of impudence; and I am really ſurpriſed, a gentleman of your worſhip's great underſtanding, could bear with ſuch an inſolent green-horn. The puppy's the moſt conſumate coxcomb I ever met with, and thinks to paſs a few hackneyed phraſes, and common-place ſentiments, upon us for ſter-

ling wit, and indiſputable argument; but the knowing ones are not to be taken in ſo. We're not to be gulled; ſuch tricks will not paſs upon travellers; your worſhip and I are old cocks, and fight ſhy. He ſhould not have run on ſo, only I thought it was beſt to let the blockhead blow himſelf; and I ſuppoſe you were of the ſame mind, for I ſaw your worſhip notice his behaviour." "Why,--- why--- faith," ſaid the 'Squire, heſitating, being unwilling not to acknowledge his foreſight as great as the other's, "he did run a head a little, I confeſs. Yes, yes,--- I obſerved it; ay, ay,----let me alone, I'm as quick as another;--- he prates away to be ſure; but I did not chuſe to contradict him, for if I had, I ſhould ſoon have foiled him; e'cod, if once I had ſtarted him, he'd ſoon have been run

run down; but I hate to put up a leveret; give me a ſtaunch, full grown hare, that will ſhow ſome ſport. Not but I thought he talk'd deadly well, to, at one time; to be ſure, as you ſay, he's a green-horn at argumentation."

"As green as he is," replied Colraine, "he has got the length of your ſiſter's foot, I ſee. She pays great attention to whatever he ſays; and though ſhe has hardly known him eight and forty hours, he has more influence over her than you have. By my ſoul, I'd have you take care, or worſe will come on't, for there's more in the wind than we imagine, or I'll give you my mother for a maid. She's deviliſh fond of him already, and I'm much miſtaken, if I have not diſcovered a ſecret." "A ſecret!" cried the 'Squire, "Of what

nature?" "Why, that ſhe's in love with him," replied Colraine, "and will marry him before a month's at an end, if you don't keep a ſharp look out." "By Juno," cries the 'Squire, "you have hit the right nail on the head; I'll be hang'd if you are not right. O, ſhe's a dead good one, and has got a liquoriſh tooth yet. Here will be a commence! All the hopes of our family gone for ever! I have been a ſlave to her temper for ſomething, at laſt. A pox on theſe old maids, they're as *randy* * as a he goat;---- ay, ay, you're right; I'll back your opinion for a thouſand; not but I thought ſomething of this yeſterday myſelf, when ſhe was ſo deviliſh civil to him, at firſt ſight. Yes, yes, ſhe's a knowing one; he's a handſome young fellow, and ſhe

* He means laſcivious.

has

has clapped her paws on him, as ſure as death. A plague on all caterwauling, ſay I. She has a mind for a dance in her old age, and the fortune ſhe has ſo often promiſed me and my children, muſt now go to pay the piper! Zounds! maſter Colraine, this muſt not be! Why man, ſhe's worth a hundred thouſand pounds, and that's enough to purchaſe all the ſtallions of *Rabia*, ay, and all the curates in Chriſtendom into the bargain. Would to heaven, this curſed fellow had been ſent to the Pope, the Pretender, or the Devil, inſtead of coming to Coventry." "I ſaw how matters were going," ſaid Colraine, "before they had been in the houſe a quarter of an hour. Let me alone to ſmell a rat. He has her, as ſure as a gun; ſo you had beſt look about you, and that ſharply to, for if you don't out

with him, he'll ſoon out with you, take my word for it." "Mercy on me!" cried the 'Squire, "you frighten me out of my ſenſes! What's to be done?" "Nay, for my part," replied the other, "I know not how to adviſe you; the only thing you can do, is to endeavour, as much as poſſible, to prejudice her againſt him; but that will be no eaſy matter, I believe; for, when once a woman of her years, ſets her mind on a handſome young fellow, the devil himſelf can't put him out of her head" "That I know by experience," replied the 'Squire, "an old mare is always more wanton than a young filly; but I'll endeavour to do his buſineſs for him, for I'll tell her, he's a Jeſuit, and I know ſhe abominates all *Papiſhes*; beſides which, I'll ſwear he's a devil amongſt the wenches, and keeps as many

many whores as the great Mogul." "If you tell her he loves wenching," replied Colraine, "you'll only make her the more eager to have him; for moſt women prefer a rake to a modeſt man, and are ſooner captivated with thoſe who make an open profeſſion of looſe principles, and abandoned behaviour, than by men celebrated for continence and virtue: 'tis the frailty of the ſex, founded on a very miſtaken opinion, contrary to nature and common ſenſe." "Well," ſaid the 'Squire, "if I find what you ſay to be true, and ſhe really does marry him, by Juno, and Jupiter to, I'll give her the doing it, and that to ſome tune; ſhe ſhan't have much comfort with her caterwauling, for I'll not be afraid to ſpeak my mind boldly, when I know I ſhall loſe nothing by it. For my part, I thought ſhe had left off

her mad pranks; but I find ſhe's as ſkittiſh as ever. By Juno, I ſhould not now be ſurpriſed, if, in one of her wanton fits, ſhe offers herſelf a candidate to repreſent the lady Godiva, * at our next fair." "She may ſafely do that," ſaid Colraine, "for the devil take me, if I believe ſhe'd have one Peeping Tom."

Where this converſation would have ended, it is not eaſy for us to conjecture, had they not mutually agreed to cloſe all with a bottle and a pipe; the one, to drown his grief and vexation; and the other, to heighten his joy, on finding how eaſily he had worked the 'Squire up to his wiſhes. We ſhall

* The hiſtorical anecdote to which this alludes, is too generally known, to require an explanation here.

there-

therefore, leave them for the preſent, and proceed to things of greater importance; the particulars of which, may be ſeen in the next chapter, if the reader chuſes to peruſe it.

CHAP. XII.

A very ſhort one; containing an intereſting Circumſtance, on which ſome important Events in this Hiſtory depend.

WHEN Miſs Southern retired to her chamber, after ſupper, that night ſhe had been at her father's, with the Governeſs and the Curate, ſhe found her heart ſtrangely affected, and experienced a ſolicitude unknown before, without being able to impute it to any particular cauſe. During the whole night, ſhe continued very reſtleſs, and found herſelf unable to compoſe her mind to its wonted eaſe and tranquility.

In

In the morning, when ſhe aroſe, and came down to breakfaſt, the preſence of Mr. Myrtle, gave birth to ſuch ideas as inſtantly explained the cauſe of her late uneaſineſs; at the ſame time, that ſhe found herſelf inſenſibly engaged in a recollection of her ſituation at her father's, when ſhe fainted away. She now fancied herſelf juſt recovering, and caſting her eyes on the delicate Myrtle, hanging over her with inexpreſſible tenderneſs, and watching with anxiety and impatience; while his countenance brightened by ſlow degrees, from joy to tranſport, as he perceived her revive, and diſcover increaſing ſigns of life. Certain it is, that, by ſuch recollections, the ſoul repreſents to herſelf, the idea of things paſt, in more lively colours than when they happened; and this enjoyment, though imaginary, affords real

pleaſure.

pleaſure. We love to recall thoſe ſenſations which have flattered us, becauſe, we imagine we have merited the enjoyment they gave us.

As ſhe found herſelf in this ſituation, immediately after ſhe entered the room, ſhe withdrew as ſoon as ſhe conveniently could, and waited in an adjoining apartment, till her aunt aroſe, and came down ſtairs. During this retirement, ſhe endeavoured to make an examination into the ſituation of her heart; and, at length, found, that the amiable Curate, had imperceptibly gained a footing there. At firſt, ſhe ſhuddered at the thought, and was alarmed for the conſequence of what ſhe felt.---She wept---ſhe thought---ſhe reaſoned with herſelf---ſhe wept, and thought again---till at laſt, the recollection of his tenderneſs

tenderneſs to her the night before, inſpired gratitude---and gratitude inſpired love: And as ſhe knew there was nothing criminal, in indulging a virtuous and honourable paſſion, for one who appeared amiable beyond the generality of his ſex, ſhe ſoon reſumed her uſual cheerfulneſs, and felt ſenſations more tranſporting, than ſhe had ever known before.

——"*How ſweet is love itſelf poſſeſt,*
"*When but love's ſhadows are ſo rich in joy?*" *

She now returned to Myrtle, who ſaw plainly, the emotions of her ſoul, as ſhe entered the room; and, by her change of countenance, diſcovered the

* *Shakeſpeare.*

ſituation

ſituation of her heart. From this moment, all his late fears vaniſhed, as to her being engaged to another; while hope promiſed him the gratification of his moſt flattering expectations; and he felt unuſual tranſport, on the proſpect of future felicity; which is generally, the principal ingredient of preſent happineſs. He now determined to declare his paſſion, when ever a convenient opportunity offered; and endeavour to fix her his, for ever. But, this he knew would be beſt accompliſhed, by indirect and unperceived approaches, that he might lead her to wiſh for a diſcovery, before he made it: which in love, is certainly the beſt method of inſuring ſucceſs, and of preventing thoſe unhappy diſappointments, that are too frequently the conſequence of precipitation, in caſes of this nature.

From

From this happy morning, they began to be more attentive to each other, and ſoon diſcovered the ſentiments of their minds by their looks, before they ventured to give them utterance; not, that it was long, ere Mr. Myrtle ſaw a favourable moment offer itſelf, for declaring his paſſion and his wiſhes, which he embraced; and had the pleaſure of receiving every ſatisfaction from Miſs Southern, ſhe could give him, conſiſtent with her dignity, and that ſtrict attachment to female delicacy and propriety, which ſhe had been taught to obſerve.

We wiſh we could acquaint our readers, with the particulars of the converſation, which paſſed between them on this occaſion, but we never were able to obtain the leaſt knowledge of it; and, therefore,

therefore, we can only recommend them to the perſon who was Miſs Southern's waiting maid, at that time; whoſe curioſity, we doubt not, led her, according to the practice of her fraternity, to liſten at the key-hole of the room-door, where they were at that time. This perſon, of whom we ſhall have occaſion to ſpeak by and by, married the Governeſſes's butler, a few years ſince, who, by joining the emoluments of his place, with a portion his wife had ſaved in the ſame ſituation, lately ſet up an inn, at the memorable town of *Stratford-upon-Avon*; a houſe where travellers will meet with as good entertainment, as any where in the county of Warwick; but very unfortunately for us, as well as them, we do not remember the ſign, nor are we very clear, whether it has any ſign at all; and, therefore, we muſt leave

leave our readers to find it out, in the beſt manner they can, if chance ſhould ever direct them to paſs that way. The landlady's maiden name was *Suſan*; at leaſt, ſhe went by that name, when ſhe attended on Miſs Southern; but further, theſe deponents ſay not.

CHAP.

CHAP. XIII.

Containing a Variety of intereſting Particulars, by Means of which, the Plot begins to thicken.

THE lovers embraced every opportunity of ſeeing and converſing with each other; and enjoyed that pure and ſupreme delight, known only to them whoſe love is mutual and diſintereſted; and, which the great Author of the univerſe has decreed alone to virtue: A pleaſure ſo tranſcendent and divine, as the vicious can neither enjoy nor conceive; becauſe, it is not only ſuperior, but diſtinct in its very eſſence, from the wanton levities of lawleſs and unreſtrained gratifications; being found-

ed

ed on the calm complacency of reaſon, a tender and reciprocal approbation and eſteem, unallied with the tumultuous deſire of paſſion.---But though our hero's mind was happily engaged in the enjoyment of the moſt agreeable ſenſations, he was neither inattentive to the duties of his function, or the intereſts of mankind; for, as he lived for the good of others, as well as himſelf, he did not ſuffer any thing to withdraw him, from thoſe obligations he owed to ſociety.

The reader, will probably think it ſtrange, and rather romantic, that this young couple, who had been acquainted with each other, but a few days, ſhould ſo ſuddenly yield to the impreſſions of love. But, we think otherwiſe, and, that it was impoſſible, two ſuch amiable beings, could ſee one another long, without

out a mutual exchange of affection and love.—How could ſo delicate and refined a creature, as Miſs Southern, who had hardly ever converſed with any but her own ſex, behold ſo exalted a character as Myrtle, without admiration? Which admiration, muſt ſoon create eſteem, and that eſteem give birth to love: Since his perſon, converſation, ſenſibility and addreſs, were ſo irreſiſtibly pleaſing, as to command attention. And, can it be a matter of wonder, that one of his penetration and diſcernment, and whoſe heart was ſuſceptible of the delicate paſſions, ſhould ſo readily be captivated by ſo beautiful and deſirable an object? What reſolution, what phyloſophy, could withſtand the glowing modeſty of her countenance; her ſilent diffidence, and ſweet reſerve? Her lively, yet controlled imagination,

and

and her total forgetfulneſs, and inattention to her beauty; of which ſhe appeared unconſcious, while every eye remarked it with admiration?

Their attachment to each other, and the familiarities that paſſed between them, was never noticed by the Governeſs; who, indeed, gave them frequent opportunities of being alone, and of enjoying the happineſs of converſing together without interruption, when ſhe retired to her ſtudy, to purſue her own amuſements, which ſhe conſtantly did every day, for ſome hours. The good lady, was naturally of an unſuſpicious diſpoſition, and probably thought, if ſhe thought at all, on this head, that her niece was in no danger, from an intimacy, with a man of Myrtle's virtuous and refined turn of mind.

This

This intimacy, had not ſubſiſted many months (during which time, Myrtle reſided at the caſtle, which he ſeldom quitted, except when he was obliged to attend pariſh duty) before Mrs. Suſan, of whom we have made honourable mention, in the laſt chapter, began to caſt a ſheep's eye at him, and, not ſuſpecting what had paſt between her young lady and him, ſhe thought him a fit ſubject to play off the artillery of love upon; in which art, ſhe was no unſkilfull engineer, having practiſed it with good ſucceſs, full fifteen years, viz. from the age of ſixteen, to one and thirty. The charms of Myrtle's perſon, ſoon rekindled the flame of love in her tender boſom, which had been almoſt extinguiſhed, by a diſappointment ſhe met with, about four months before, when John, the footman,

footman, who had pretended love to her, thought proper to give the preference to Molly, the houſe maid, a blooming girl, of nineteen, whom he married.

Mrs. Suſan had lived at the caſtle, from the time the Governeſs firſt ſettled there, and having conducted herſelf with good demeanour to thoſe below, as well as thoſe above her, ſhe maintained a very reputable footing in the family, and was thought to ſtand upon good ground. As ſhe conſidered herſelf the principal of the female domeſtics, ſhe was contented with her imaginary ſuperiority; and, therefore, never interfered with the maids: Nor, do we know that ſhe did with the men, any further than was conſiſtent with decency and good manners; having been peculiarly attached to a virtuous courſe of

of life, ever ſince the age of eighteen, when ſhe had the misfortune to fall a prey to the ſeducing arts of an apothecary, at Warwick, with whom ſhe then lived as a ſervant; which was productive of bringing a little malicious witneſs into the world, whoſe evidence was very fatal to her character. It is with ſome regret, we record this unlucky circumſtance, and we wiſh the integrity we owe to our readers, would have permited us to paſs it over in ſilence; but, conſidering ourſelves in the light of hiſtorians, we are unfortunately tied down to truth, and write, as it were, in fetters, being obliged to keep on in the direct road, without the privilege of turning to one ſide, or the other, in order to avoid diſagreeable circumſtances.

This

This ſaid Mrs. Suſan, valued herſelf very highly, on all occaſions, for her virtue, which was the uſual topic of her converſation, with her fellow ſervants; notwithſtanding which, ſhe ſet her cap at every male creature in the houſe, and was always very courteous to every new comer; that is, in a civil way, and conſiſtent with decency and good manners. Having paſſed ſome years for an immaculate virgin, without being able to fix the affections of any one, beyond the favour of an accidental civility, ſhe had juſt determined, at the time the Curate came to the caſtle, to be leſs ſcrupulous in the choice of a partner for life, fearing, that ſhe had already over ſtood the market, and omitted to embrace ſome opportunities of being made a wife, that were not likely to offer themſelves again.

The arrival of Myrtle, again raiſed her ambition, and baniſhed all her humble reſolutions. She conſidered this event, as the criſis of her fate, and determined to ſpare no pains to accompliſh her wiſhes and expectations, which were greatly raiſed on this occaſion. She ſoon found, that he was but a Curate, and, therefore, ſhe imagined his views could not be ſo ambitious, but, that a little art and good management, might lead him to caſt a favourable glance her way; in conſideration of which, ſhe determined to ſet her cap at him, and to be diligently attentive to render herſelf uſeful to him, by a tender of thoſe civilities ſhe had an opportunity of conferring, in order to fix an attachment, which, in the end, might crown all her wiſhes with ſucceſs. In purſuance of theſe reſolutions, ſhe conſtantly

ſtantly threw herſelf in his way, and, if poſſible, catched the opportunity of holding ſome frivolous converſation with him in the breakfaſting parlour, in a morning, where he uſually waited for the riſing of the Governeſs, and Miſs Southern. Upon theſe occaſions, ſhe was ſure to uſe every art, ſhe poſſibly could, to render herſelf important, and to be very bountiful in her offers to ſerve him. Which was acknowledged on his part, with ſo much civility, and ſuch expreſſions of gratitude, as inclined her to think herſelf ſure of her point. But as ſhe was no ſtranger to the great reſpect paid him, by her Miſtreſs and Miſs Southern, ſhe thought it neceſſary to have ſome converſation with her young lady, before ſhe attempted to be more explicit with the Curate; and, accordingly, one morning, when

ſhe went to dreſs Miſs Southern, after the Governeſs had retired to her ſtudy, ſhe began in the manner following.

"Dear me, Miſs, does not your honour think Mr. Myrtle a very handſome young gentleman?" "Yes," ſaid Miſs Southern, "he is very agreeable in his perſon." "Agreeable, madam," cried Suſan, "I thinks he's more than agreeable, for I never, in all my born days, beheld ſo lovely a man. How tall and well made he is! What a blooming countenance! And, what ſweet eyes he has! Well, I never beheld the likes before; and, yet I have ſeen, and been acquainted with many handſome men in my times: but the beſt of them were no more to be compared to him, than I am to your ladyſhip; not but I was thought to be very agreeable, when I

was

was of your ladyſhip's age."—"Bleſs me, Suſan," ſaid Miſs Southern, "you run on ſtrangely!"—"Why, lord, madam," replied Suſan, "who can think of ſuch a charming creature, without being in a rapture; he's beautiful to admiration. Don't your ladyſhip think ſo, and don't you admire him?"—"I admire his underſtanding and his virtue," ſaid Miſs Southern, "but to me, his perſon is the leaſt part of his accompliſhments."—"O, dear me, madam," replied Suſan, "begging your honour's pardon, for making ſo free, you knows but little of the ſexes, if you prefers the knowledge of men to their perſons. Why the perſon's every thing. Does any woman of ſenſe, like an ugly fellow in preference to a handſome one, becauſe he may happen to be a great *Scollard?* O, no, my dear lady, you'll

know better by and by, I hopes."—"Prithee, Suſan," ſaid Miſs Southern, "don't run on ſo; I never employ my thoughts about the men; they are all alike to me, I know no difference."—"God bleſs your ladyſhip's dear little heart, I ſays," cried Suſan, "I hopes you'll not always be of that way of thinking; for, tho' I hopes I'm as vartuous as your honour, yet, I can't help ſaying, I thinks there's a great deal of difference in men, for none that ever my eyes beheld came up to Mr. Myrtle. O! he's a dear, ſweet man; and ſo handſome, that every body muſt love him. Don't your ladyſhip love him? Come, I knows you does, I can ſee it by your dear, little, ſweet eyes, that you does."--"Who,--I love him, Suſan?" replied the young lady, "how can you aſk me ſuch a queſtion? It is not for

me,

me, to ſay who I love."—"Nay,—for the matter of that, madam," ſaid Suſan, "I only joked; for God knows, your ladyſhip would greatly demean yourſelf, to be in love with Mr. Myrtle; for he is but a poor Curate, make the beſt of him, and that, in plain Engliſh, is but a parſon's journeyman, which is not much better than an *upper* ſervant in a creditable family, ſuch as I am, if it is ſo good."—"Pray, Suſan, give over this fooliſh converſation," ſaid Miſs Southern (rather in a pet) "and don't plague me about Mr. Myrtle; and one thing, I deſire of you, never let me hear you ſpeak ſo ſlightingly of him again, for it does not become you." Here, Miſs Southern could not help bluſhing a little, which the other perceiving, ſaid, with leſs familiarity, "dear, madam, I begs your honour's pardon, a thouſand

times, for I'm ſure I did not mean to offend your ladyſhip; you knows I loves to talk with you, but you knows I'd ſooner die, than give you any uneaſineſs; and you knows, madam, I could not be a cungurer, to divine your that ladyſhip liked Mr. Myrtle, which I'm ſure you does, or you'd never have bluſhed as you did juſt now."—"Pray, Suſan, have done, or I ſhall be very angry with you," ſaid Miſs Southern, "your tongue runs before your wit."—"Dear madam, don't be angry with me," ſaid Suſan, "I meant no harm, your ladyſhip knows I loves you too well, to do any thing to give you pain. If you like Mr. Myrtle, no-body has any thing to do with it, that I knows; and though he is but a Curate, he's a handſome, charming man to be ſure, and gentle-folks have a right to do as they pleaſe, without regarding what

what any body ſays; not but I thinks your ladyſhip may ſtoop and pick up nothing at any time."—"Why, ſurely, Suſan," ſaid Miſs Southern (a little nettled) "you are crazy, or you'd never let your tongue run ſo, and give yourſelf ſuch liberties with your betters."—"My betters! cried Suſan (toſſing up her head with a ſcornful air) who's my betters, I wonders? Your ladyſhip is, to be ſure, but I thinks a lady's waiting maid, is as good as a country curate, any day in the week. I'm ſure there was a time, my family would have thought it a diſgrace, to have had a poor curate in it; and I don't think I'm any diſgrace to it, becauſe I'm a ſarvant, for I've always taken care to preſarve my vartue, and never ſuffered any fellow to take liberties with me, except with decency and good manners;

ſo that I may defy the whole world to ſay, *Black's the white of my eye.* And, as to Mr. Myrtle, he never took any liberties with me, and the devil fetch me if ever he ſhall, or any ones elſe; and I wiſhes I may be burnt, if I don't wiſh this ſame Mr. Myrtle had been at Jericho, before he had ſet his foot in this houſe, to make any differences between me and your ladyſhip. But, for the matter of that, I knows what I knows, and can ſee into a mill-ſtone, as far as other people, for all I'm a poor ſarvant; that I can." Here ſhe fell a crying, while poor Miſs Southern, quite hurried with what ſhe had ſaid, quitted the room, and left her to herſelf.

CHAP.

CHAP. XIV.

Full of Miſchief.

MRS. Suſan, was greatly diſappointed, in reſpect to the converſation betwixt her and Miſs Southern, in the laſt chapter; for, ſhe expected to have found her young lady, no way prejudiced in favour of Myrtle: on the contrary, ſhe imagined he was ſo indifferent to her, that ſhe would readily have joined in opinion, "that a country curate was not ſuperior to an *upper* ſervant in a creditable family." Had this been the caſe, it was Mrs. Suſan's intention, to have made her young lady acquainted with her ſcheme upon Myrtle; and, by claiming the

merit of making her a confidant in the affair, have ſolicited her aſſiſtance and influence, by means of which, ſhe ſoon hoped to bring matters to a happy concluſion. But, from what paſſed betwixt them on this occaſion, ſhe had reaſon to fear, that all her hopes were nipped in the bud. This was a very melancholy circumſtance, having already made ſeven and twenty attempts of this nature, every one of which had proved abortive; unleſs we except the affair with the apothecary at Warwick, which we mentioned juſt now; but, that not being a matrimonial one, it does not properly belong to the number juſt recited.

Notwithſtanding Mrs. Suſan found her ambitious views were likely to meet with a check, ſhe was unwilling to relinquiſh this favourite ſcheme of becoming a gentle-

a gentlewoman; for, ſuch ſhe imagined would be the caſe, if ſhe could once marry the Curate; and, therefore, ſhe conſidered, with great deliberation, whether ſhe ſhould entirely give the matter up, or find out ſome new method of purſuing it? She had judgment enough to diſcover, that if Miſs Southern knew of her intention, ſhe would be a bar in her way, as ſhe had great reaſon to believe, the young lady entertained a regard for Myrtle herſelf; but, of this ſhe reſolved to have ſtronger proof, before ſhe entered on a trial of her ſkill, againſt that of Miſs Southern.

From the moment ſhe came to this reſolution, ſhe omitted no opportunity of watching the motions of the Curate, and her young lady; for which purpoſe, whenever ſhe knew they were together alone,

alone, ſhe was either privately concealed in an adjoining cloſet, or liſtening at the key-hole of the room door; notwithſtanding which, ſhe ſhewed greater attention, affability and reſpect, to both of them, on every occaſion that offered, than ſhe had uſually done before. By being an ear-witneſs to a converſation betwixt the lovers, one evening, ſhe was confirmed in her ſuſpicions, and found, to her great mortification, that they were firmly attached to each other, by the endearing obligations of friendſhip and love.

This diſcovery, threw the tender and delicate Mrs. Suſan, into a fit of deſpair, which had liked to have overſet her for ever. But, as griefs are not eternal, and thoſe of women ſhorteſt of duration, ſhe ſoon came about again, without either

either hanging herſelf in her garters, or, putting an end to her life in the great canal behind the caſtle; which, by turns, ſhe had reſolved to do, in the firſt emotions of her tumultuous rage. Reſentment, malice and revenge, were the paſſions that next took place in her chaſte boſom; and, ſhe ſoon came to the pious reſolution, of endeavouring to carry her own point, without attending to the intentions or happineſs of any one elſe: wiſely conſidered, that charity began at home, and, that ſhe was fleſh and blood, as well as her young lady, and, therefore, ſubject to the ſame paſſions and inclinations.

The only probable method of accompliſhing what ſhe wiſhed, was to inform the Governeſs, of the intimacy ſhe had diſcovered, betwixt Miſs Southern and the

the Curate; for, if haply for her, it was without the knowledge and conſent of the Governeſs, ſhe flattered herſelf, ſhe ſhould not only gain her over to her intereſt, but, by breaking this ſecret connection, have an opportunity of putting her deſigns on the Curate in execution, without the danger of a rival; and, ſhe imagined, he was not compoſed of ſuch very delicate materials, but, that one woman might do as well for him as another.—The next morning, ſhe waited till the Governeſs had retired to her ſtudy, and, knowing that to be the moſt private place in the whole houſe, went to her, and began as follows:

"Dear madam,—I hopes your honour will pardon my rudeneſs, and not take it ill, that I perſume to trouble you, now you're retir'd to your ſtudy; for, you

you knows, I'd ſooner die, than diſoblige ſo very good, and ſo very kind a lady as you've been to me;—God's bleſſings on you, I loves you dearly, that I does, and ſo I ought, or I ſhould be the vileſt creature under the copes of heavens; and, the ſin of *h*ingratitude, they ſay, is worſe than witchcraft, and God forbids I ſhould be guilty of that, tho' there's no great dangers, for none but your l*a*rned folks knows any thing about c*u*nguration, and 'tis well they don't, for, I've heard as how, that the devil ſometimes leads them ſuch a dance, they are put to their trumps to get rid of him, with all their l*a*rning. God keep your honour, and me, and all good chriſtians in the right way;—I'm for every thing fair and above board, but there's ſo much treachery, and deceit and wickedneſs, going forward in the world,

world, that 'tis hard to do the thing that's right, now a days; tho', I hopes as how, I've never done any thing wrong yet, and, with the bleſſings of God, I hopes I never ſhall."

"Prithee, Suſan," ſaid the Governeſs (ſtaring with amazement) "what does all this mean? You're ſurely out of your ſenſes; I never heard you run on ſo before; is any thing the matter with you?—"No, an't pleaſe your honour," replied Suſan, "nothing's the matter with me, that I knows of, but I wiſhes, I could ſay ſo of other folks; tho' for the matter of that, I hates to betray any ones, and never *peached* a chriſtian ſoul, in all my born days;—but I knows my duty, that I does, as well as any ones, for all I'm but a poor ſarvant; and why not? Sarvants may know what's what, ſometimes,

ſometimes, as well as gentle-folks; ay, and better too, may-hap. Good-lack-a-day! what, they thought I'd no eyes, I ſuppoſe? but, I'd have ſome folks know, I've eyes and ears too; ay, and my wits about me, as well as any ones; and better too, for ought I knows; tho' I hates to make miſchiefs, that I does, but, I'll not betray my truſt, for any ones, were they to offer me the *Hinges*, tho' I wiſhes I may be burnt alive, if ere I ſaw the colour of his money. No, no, your parſons are no friends to poor ſarvants, they give a deal of trouble, but the devil a farthing do we ever get of them; and, by my faith, I'd as ſoon ſee the devil in the houſe, as a parſon, that I would, at any times."

"Why, Suſan, are you mad?" cried the Governeſs, "ſure the wench is crazy!"

crazy!"—"Not ſo crazy," replied Suſan, "but I knows what I ſays, and what I does, as well as any ones; ay, and I knows my duty too, and I loves your honour, and I loves my dear young lady, and I'd ſooner die, than ſee any ones do her an injury; but ſarvants are ſarvants, and gentle-folks are gentle-folks, that's all; but I ſhall break my poor heart, if any harm ſhould come to her, for I loves her as dearly as if ſhe was my own; tho' God forbid ſhe ſhould be mine, unleſs 'twas in an honeſt way."

"Mercy on me," cried the Governeſs, "the devil's in the wench, or ſhe'd never let her tongue run ſo,"—"No, madam," replied Suſan, "the devil was never in me, nor any thing elſe, but what was proper and fit; tho' I believes the devil's in ſome folks, but more ſhame for 'em,

if

if he is; and I wiſhes I may be burnt, if I thinks the parſons have more power over the devil, than other folks, tho' they pretend to it. The nearer the church, the further from God, they ſay. But ſome folks pretend to do more than they can; I have met with many ſuch in my time, the more's the pity, I ſays. Well, for my part, I hopes the old one, will have all the parſons at laſt, and I'm ſure, I ſhall hate the ſight of ones, as long as I lives."

"Why, what in the name of goodneſs have the parſons (as you call them) done to you, Suſan?" cried the Governeſs. "Nothing, madam," replied Suſan, "and I'll be burnt if ever they ſhall; but I greatly fears ſome of them have done what they ſhould not; or, if they have not already, it will not be long firſt;

firſt; and tho' I hates to make miſchiefs, yet I knows my duty, bleſſed be the Lord for it, and ſo, my dear madam, the Curate's a naughty man, and is doing what he ſhould not do, with my young lady.—Now the murdur's out, and my conſcience is eaſy."

"O! heavens!" cried the Governeſs! almoſt ready to ſink with horror, "is it poſſible my niece can be ſo loſt to virtue? Is it poſſible Myrtle can be ſuch a villain?"—"Yes, indeed, and indeed," replied Suſan, "he is ſuch a villain, I aſſures your honour; the more ſhame for him. O! I could tear his naſty eyes out, that I could; to draw my dear, ſweet lady away ſo. Would no-body elſe ſerve his turn, but he muſt ſeek his wicked wills of ſuch a dear, ſweet creature? O! 'tis a burning ſhame, and I wiſhes

wiſhes his gownd may be ſtripped over his ears for it."

"But, are you ſure you are clear in what you ſay, Suſan?" ſaid the Governeſs. "O yes, an't pleaſe your honour," replied Suſan, "very clear; I over heard all; nay, and I ſaw all too, tho' they thought I did not; but, let me alones, to find out a ſecret; and, for the matter of that, tho' I ſays it, that ſhould not ſay it, and, yet I does ſay it, and ſtands to it when I've dones, no ones a better hand at ſuch things, than Suſan." —"Well, what did you hear, and what did you ſee?" ſaid the Governeſs. "O dear madam," ſaid Suſan, "don't aſk me too much, for your honour knows, I hates to make miſchiefs; beſides, you'll be angry with my young lady, and then ſhe'll be angry with me, and I ſhall be counted

counted a tell-tale, and ſo I ſhall get a bad names, and, then I ſhall loſe my *crackter*, and then your honour knows I ſhall be undone; ſo I prays your honour not to aſk me any more queſtions; now pray, dear madam, don't, for I'd ſooner die, than make miſchiefs of my young lady; and then, your honour knows the Curate's a man of great larning, and who knows, but he may raiſe the devil out of ſpite, to carry me away in a *wurlywind*, and then what will become of me? O, gracious heavens, my blood runs cold at the thoughts of it."

"Have done with your nonſenſical prating, Suſan," ſaid the Governeſs, with great impatience, "and let me know the particulars of what you've diſcovered." "Lack-a-day, madam," replied Suſan, "I've diſcovered nothings, nor I knows

knows nothings."—"What," returned the Governeſs, "have you the aſſurance, huſſy, to deny all you've ſaid? Give me up the truth this inſtant, or I ſhall be the death of you."—"Why, then, I wiſhes I may die a maid, ſo I does, and that's a terrible thing, as I've heard ſay," replied Suſan, "if I knows any more, than that the Curate loves Miſs Laura, and, how is it poſſible but he muſt love ſuch a dear creature? and, may-hap, ſhe may love him, and, may-hap not; and if ſhe does, how can ſhe help it, and if ſhe does not, how can he help it; and, if they both loves one anothers, how can you help it? And, what is it to me, whether they loves one anothers or not? I knows no more than I knows, nor ſo much neither, and if I did, I'd be burnt before I'd tell, let your honour be ever ſo angry; but,

as I knows nothings, I can ſay nothings, and, if your honour wants to know more, you had beſt conſult your cunguring books, or ſome of your *hopgoplins*, that they ſays your honour keeps lock'd up in your ſtudy; but, I begs your honour not to let 'em looſe while I ſtays, for I'd as ſoon ſee a naked man at any times, as a *hopgoplin*."

Suſan's nonſenſe, and equivocation, together with her ſneer at the Governeſs, provoked the good lady to ſuch a pitch of wrath and violence, as might have been attended with very fatal conſequences, had not the other crept near the door by ſlow, and imperceptible degrees, as ſhe ſaw the ſtorm riſing, and, without ceremony, made a precipitate retreat, as ſoon as ſhe pronounced the laſt ſentence, juſt recited. But the conſequences

ſequences of Suſan's incoherent intelligence, did not end here, for ſhe had ſaid enough, not only to awaken the curioſity of the Governeſs, but to alarm her fears, in reſpect to her niece which gave riſe to ſome extraordinary events; but, as they are very numerous, and compoſe the moſt important circumſtances of this hiſtory, we muſt refer the reader to the ſecond volume, where he will find them properly ſtated, and authentically related; as we think it high time to drop the curtain for the preſent, in order to give him a little reſpite, that he may the better be enabled to peruſe the remainder of this work, with eaſe and cheerfulneſs.

END of the FIRST VOLUME.

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